

THE
CAMBRIDGE
MEDIEVAL HISTORY

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CHAPTER XXIV.

BYZANTINE CIVILISATION.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

BYZANTINE CIVILISATION.

For over a thousand years, from the end of the fourth century to the middle of the fifteenth, the Byzantine Empire was the centre of a civilisation equal to that of any age in brilliancy, certainly the most brilliant known to the Middle Ages, and possibly even the only real civilisation which prevailed in Europe between the close of the fifth century and the beginning of the eleventh. While the barbarian states of the West were laboriously developing the elements of a new culture from the scanty remains of the Roman tradition, Byzantium—Rome's successor, and imbued with the spirit and teachings of Hellenism—never ceased to be the centre of refinement and the home of a great movement in thought and art. Byzantium, indeed, was no mere transmitter of the tradition of antiquity. Contact with the East had modified her, and the influence of Christianity had left a deep imprint; and, contrary to a still widely-spread opinion, she was capable of originality and creation. Hellenism, Christianity, and the East met and combined in forming Byzantine civilisation; and by the characteristic forms it assumed, by its superiority, as well as by the long and profound influence it exercised in both the Eastern and Western world, this civilisation played a prominent part in the history of the Middle Ages, the history of thought, and the history of mankind.

For over a thousand years, Constantinople, the capital of the Empire, was the most brilliant and characteristic expression of this civilisation. For over a thousand years the whole world gazed with feelings of admiration and greed at the city which Byzantines called “the City protected by God,” or merely, “the City (*πόλις*),” the magnificent, mighty, and prosperous city which has been felicitously described as “the Paris of the Middle Ages.” The whole medieval world dreamt of Constantinople as a city famous for beauty, wealth, and power, seen through a shimmer of gold. “She is the glory of Greece,” wrote a Frenchman in the twelfth century; “her wealth is renowned, and she is even richer than is reported.” “Constantinople,” said another, “is the peer of Rome in holiness and majesty”; and Benjamin of Tudela adds: “Except Baghdad there is no town in the universe to be compared with her.” According to Robert of Clari, it was said that “Two-thirds of the world's wealth were in Constantinople, and the other third was scattered throughout the world.” And everyone knows the celebrated passage in which Villehardouin declares: “No man could believe that so rich a city existed in all the world,” and asserts that

the city was "queen over all others." The fame of the imperial city resounded throughout the whole of the then-known world. Men dreamt of her amid the chilly mists of Norway, and on the banks of the Russian rivers, down which the Varangians sailed towards matchless Tsarigrad; they dreamt of her in Western strongholds, where *trouvères* sang the marvels of the imperial palace, the floating hall swayed by the breezes of the sea, and the dazzling carbuncle which gave light to the imperial apartments during the night. Men dreamt of her alike among the barbarian Slavs and the needy Armenians, who aspired to seek their fortunes in the service of an Emperor lavish of pay. Men dreamt of her in Venice and the commercial cities of Italy, and calculated the magnificent revenues which the Byzantine sovereigns yearly derived from their city. Even up to her final days of decadence, Constantinople remained one of the most beautiful and illustrious cities of the universe, the splendid centre and ornament of the Empire, the home of matchless wealth and culture, the pride and glory of the monarchy.

In order to obtain a clear understanding of Byzantine civilisation, to visualise the mode of life and the dominant tastes in this vanished society, and to realise the mentality of the Greeks in the Middle Ages, we must therefore begin by studying Constantinople. And moreover it is about her that we have most information. At every stage of her history there are valuable documents which describe for us admirably the buildings of the great city, and the appearance she presented: for the fifth century we have the *Notitia* of 450; for the sixth century the book of *Edifices* by Procopius, the poem of Paul the Silentary, and the description of the church of the Holy Apostles by Nicholas Mesarites; for the tenth century the poem of Constantine the Rhodian on the seven wonders of the capital and the *Ceremonies* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus; finally the narratives of countless travellers,—French, Italians, Spaniards, Russians, and Arabs,—who visited Constantinople from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. Moreover Byzantine literature reflects, as in a magic mirror, the ideas which were familiar and precious to the inhabitants of the capital, and the great currents of thought which prevailed in her. But Constantinople was not the Empire. In contrast to the capital which was luxurious, refined, and elegant, and also turbulent, cruel, and corrupt, there was another Byzantium, simpler and ruder, more robust and more serious, the Byzantium of the provinces, about which we know less than the other, but whose aspect we must nevertheless attempt to reconstruct; for the strength and stability of the monarchy was derived therefrom, no less than from Constantinople, and its study is indispensable if we wish to understand the character of Byzantine civilisation. In this vanished world, Constantinople and the provinces seem like the two opposite leaves of a diptych, and, in spite of the deep contrast offered by these two Byzantiums, it was their union which formed the power and greatness of the Empire.

But before presenting a picture of Byzantine civilisation under this twofold aspect, a preliminary remark is necessary. In the course of a thousand years, between the fourth century when it came into being and the fifteenth when it disintegrated, Byzantine society necessarily underwent profound changes. A historian who seeks to present a picture of the whole runs great risks of completely falsifying the aspect of things if he borrows indiscriminately from authors of widely different ages, if, like Krause who aspired to shew us the "Byzantines of the Middle Ages," he combines facts drawn from sources which are chronologically widely apart. In order to avoid this danger, we shall here note only the most persistent features, those which seem really characteristic of Byzantine civilisation, and, apart from these permanent elements, we shall always be careful to mention the exact date of the social phenomena recorded and to mark their evolution. Thus perhaps will emerge an approximately correct presentation of this vanished world, this infinitely complex society to which the mixture of nationalities imparted so strongly cosmopolitan a character, and which we must study successively in Constantinople and in the provinces so as to arrive at a clear understanding of the soul of Byzantium.

I.

By the general appearance she presented, the splendour of her public buildings, the multitude of ancient statues which adorned her broad squares, the luxury of her palaces and the beauty of her churches, the picturesque animation lent to her streets by a motley and cosmopolitan crowd, Constantinople, even at first sight, produced a powerful impression of wealth and magnificence. By the middle of the fifth century, barely a hundred years after her foundation, the Byzantine capital was already a very large town. Theodosius II was obliged to enlarge the city which had become too narrow for the enormous influx of population, and carried the new enclosure far beyond the wall built by Constantine, thus making her boundaries, except at one point, identical with those of Stamboul in the present day. For her protection he built the admirable line of ramparts from the Sea of Marmora to the end of the Golden Horn, which still exist to-day, and whose triple defences, ranged one behind the other, remain one of the finest examples of military architecture of all time. Against this mighty wall, which rendered Constantinople a great and impregnable fortress, there hurled themselves in succession all the barbarians, Huns and Avars, Bulgars and Russians, Arabs from the East and Crusaders from the West. On the very eve of the final catastrophe in 1453, the great capital still vaunted her military power and "this crown of ramparts, which was surpassed not even by those of Babylon."

Within this vast enclosure there stretched henceforward a magnificent city. Built like Rome on seven hills, she was divided like the former

capital of the Empire into fourteen regions, and since the days of Constantine the Emperors had spared no pains to render her equal or even superior to the great city, which for so many centuries had been the heart of Roman power. The *Notitia* of 450 shews us a Constantinople full of palaces—the first region especially was, says this document, *regiis nobiliumque domiciliis clara*—magnificent squares; sumptuous buildings for public utility, baths, underground cisterns, aqueducts and shops; buildings devoted to popular amusement, theatres, hippodromes, and the like. Some figures given in the *Notitia* are significant of the greatness and wealth of the city: without taking into account the five imperial palaces, six *domus divinae* belonging to Empresses, and three *domus nobilissimae*, there were in Constantinople in the fifth century 322 streets, 52 porticoes, 4388 *domus* or mansions, and 153 private baths; and moreover this magnificent city was the finest museum in the world, because of the masterpieces of ancient art which the Emperors had removed from the famous sanctuaries of the Hellenic world to adorn their capital.

But to realise fully the importance of the imperial city, we must consider her as she was in the tenth century, at the moment when, indeed, she attained her apogee of splendour and prosperity. We possess fairly exact information as to her plan and her principal streets at this date, and they can still be traced in the thoroughfares of present-day Constantinople.

Between St Sophia to the north, the imperial palace to the south, and the Senate-house to the east, there stretched the square of the Augusteum, “Constantinople’s square of St Mark,” all surrounded with porticoes, in the centre of which, on a tall column, towered an equestrian statue of the Emperor Justinian. To the west lay the arcade of the Golden Milestone, whence started the great street of the Mese, which, like all the important thoroughfares of the city, was bordered with arcaded galleries, or *εμβολοι*. Crossing the quarter of the bazaars, and passing the Royal Basilica (Law-courts) and the Praetorium (residence of the Prefect of the City), it led into the Forum of Constantine, one of the handsomest parts of the city. In the centre stood a porphyry column (now called the *burnt pillar*), and all round the square there were palaces with gigantic domes, their walls decorated with mosaics and panels of precious metals; in front of these, under marble porticoes, were ranged the masterpieces of Greek sculpture. Thence, through the quarter of the Artopolia (the bakers), the Mese reached the great square of the Taurus, where in front of the Capitol was erected the lofty column of Theodosius, decorated, like Trajan’s column, with spiral bas-reliefs commemorating “the slaughter of the Scythian barbarians and the destruction of their towns.” Farther on there were the cross-roads of Philadelphion, where the main street split into three branches. One descended towards the Golden Horn; the second led to the church of the Holy Apostles and the gate of Charisius (Hadrianople Gate); the third and most frequented

crossed the squares of Amastrianon and the Bous, whence a street branched off to the right towards the gate of St Romanus (*Tōp Qāpū*), and finally, after crossing the Forum of Arcadius in which rose a tall column with bas-reliefs representing scenes of war and triumph, it passed in front of the monastery of Studion, and reached the Golden Gate. This was the most famous and most magnificent of all the gates of Constantinople, with its propylaea decorated with ancient bas-reliefs and inlaid with coloured marbles, and the triple bay of its triumphal arch flanked by two massive marble pylons; it was through this gate that the Emperors made their solemn entry into the capital on their days of coronation or triumph, when they went in stately procession through streets hung with tapestry, blazing with lights, and strewn with flowers, amidst the acclamations of the people, and passed along the Mese to St Sophia.

In close proximity to these vast thoroughfares, bordered with long arcaded galleries, decorated with statues, and full of rich palaces, there were naturally to be found in Constantinople narrow streets, dark, muddy, and squalid, infested with dogs and with thieves, who, says one historian, "were almost as numerous as the poor." Often sheltered in cellars, there swarmed a wretched and sordid population in miserable houses. In strong contrast to these noisy, overcrowded quarters where the people huddled together, there were peaceful and deserted districts—such, for instance, as Petron, on the slopes of the fifth hill, where amid shady gardens there stood monasteries and quiet churches, schools and hospitals. In the tenth century all the outskirts of the city, the district lying between the wall of Constantine and that of Theodosius II, was as yet sparsely inhabited; great open-air cisterns lay there with their still waters; the valley of the Lycus with its meadows was a rural and deserted spot; and there were hardly any buildings in the Blachernae suburb, with the exception of the famous sanctuary of the Virgin. Later, from the twelfth century, when the Emperors transferred their residence to the Blachernae palace, this suburb became fashionable because of its proximity to the Court, and churches and houses sprang up there. The sanctuaries of the Pantokrator (*Kilisa-jāmi'*), Pantepoptes (*Eski-İmaret-jāmi'*), Pammakaristos (*Fethiye-jāmi'*), and the Christ of Chora (*Qahriye-jāmi'*) date from this period. But in the tenth century fashionable life was elsewhere.

By the contrasts she presented Byzantine Constantinople was truly a great Oriental city. And she offered a magnificent spectacle. All these buildings of which she was full, public buildings of classical architecture and private houses of a more eastern type, palaces and churches, baths and hostleries, underground cisterns and aqueducts, columns and statues, combined to produce an incomparable effect. Constantine the Rhodian, writing in the tenth century, has justly sung the praises of "the famous and venerable city which dominates the world, whose thousand marvels shine with singular brilliancy, with the splendour of her lofty buildings,

the glory of her magnificent churches, the arcades of her long porticoes, the height of her columns rising towards the skies." Within her walls Constantinople contained seven wonders—as many as the whole ancient world had known—"wherewith she adorned herself," as was said by one author, "as with so many stars."

In this vast city there dwelt an enormous population whose numbers during the period between the fifth and the thirteenth centuries may be fixed without exaggeration at from 800,000 to 1,000,000. It was a motley and cosmopolitan population in which might be met every type, garb, condition, race. From every province in the Empire and every country in the world men flocked to Byzantium for business, for pleasure, for litigation. There were Asiatics with hooked noses, almond eyes under thick eyebrows, pointed beards, and long black hair falling over their shoulders; Bulgars with shaved heads and dirty clothes, wearing an iron chain round their waists by way of belt; fur-clad Russians with long fair moustaches; Armenian or Scandinavian adventurers, who had come to seek their fortunes in the great city; Muslim merchants from Baghdad or Syria, and Western merchants, Italians from Venice or Amalfi, Pisa or Genoa, Spaniards and Frenchmen; there were Chazars of the Imperial Guard, Varangians "tall as palm-trees," Latin mercenaries with long swords, who in their armour "looked like bronze figures." There was a confusion of every tongue and every religion. And in the midst of this animated and picturesque crowd, the inhabitants of the city might be recognised by the rich silken garments embroidered with gold in which they were clad, the fine horses on which they were mounted, and the exhibition of such luxury as gave them, as was said by a traveller, "the semblance of so many princes." Anyone who visited Constantinople a few years ago will remember the spectacle offered by the Great Bridge at Stamboul. Medieval Byzantium offered a somewhat similar spectacle, and foreigners who visited the imperial city carried away a dazzling picture of the Byzantine streets.

But in this magnificent Constantinople full of splendid sights, where extravagance of costume vied with beauty of architecture, three things were specially characteristic of Byzantine civilisation: the pomp of religious ceremonial as displayed by the Orthodox liturgy on great feast days; the brilliant ostentation of imperial life shewn in the receptions and the etiquette of the Sacred Palace; and the amusements of the Hippodrome where was manifested the mind of the people. "In Constantinople," says A. Rambaud, "for God there was St Sophia, for the Emperor the Sacred Palace, and for the people the Hippodrome." Round these three poles there gravitated a great part of Byzantine life, and in them may best be studied some of the leading features of this society.

II.

Religion held an essential place in the Byzantine world. The medieval Greeks have often been blamed for the passionate interest they took in theological disputes, and the manner in which they neglected the most serious interests and the very safety of the State for apparently futile controversies. There is no doubt that, from the Emperor down to the meanest of his subjects, the Byzantines loved controversies about faith and dogma to distraction. It would nevertheless be foolish to believe that these interminable disputes of which Byzantine history is full, and the profound troubles which resulted from them, were only caused among the masses by the love of controversy, the mania for argument, and the subtlety of the Greek intellect, and, among statesmen, by the empty pleasure of laying down the law. These great movements were determined by deeper and graver reasons. In the Eastern world heresies have often concealed and disguised political ideas and enmities, and the conduct of the Emperors in these matters was often inspired rather by State reasons than by a desire to make innovations in matters of faith. Nevertheless a deep and sincere piety inspired most Byzantine souls. This people which adored pageants loved the sumptuous magnificence of liturgical ceremonies; their pious credulity attributed miraculous virtues to the holy icons, and images "not made by hands" (*ἀχειροποιητοί*); they devoutly adored those holy relics of which Byzantium was full, treasures a thousand times more dearly esteemed than "gold and precious stones," and which tempted so strongly the covetousness of the Latins. Finally, their superstitious minds sought in every event an indication of the Divine Will; so much so that the Byzantine people, which was singularly impressionable, lived in a constant state of mystic exaltation, which, from the very outset, rendered them very amenable to the all-powerful influence of the Church. In education the study of religious matters held an important place. In society, devotion was closely allied with fashionable life; church and hippodrome were, as has ingeniously been said, the only places of public resort possessed by Byzantine society, and people repaired to the former to meet and to gossip as much as to pray. Finally, the cloister exercised a mystical attraction over many men. The foundation or endowment of monasteries was one of the commonest forms of Byzantine piety. The monks were objects of universal veneration; they were much sought after as directors of conscience by pious persons, and consequently they exerted a profound influence on society. Moved by natural piety, by weariness of the world, or by the need for renunciation and peace, many Byzantines aspired to end their days among these holy men, who by their prayers and mortifications assured the salvation of the Empire and of humanity; and wished to become, like them, "citizens of heaven." The life of the Emperor himself, closely associated with all the

religious feasts, was indeed, as has been said, a sacerdotal life; and St Sophia, where the Emperor's coronation took place, and where the ostentatious retinue of the imperial processions was displayed on the innumerable feast-days, St Sophia, the most venerated of sanctuaries, in which the Patriarch could entrench himself as in a citadel, was one of the centres of public life, of the government, and even of the diplomacy of the monarchy.

Ever since it had been rebuilt by Justinian with incomparable splendour, St Sophia had been the wonder of Constantinople. With its lofty dome, so aerial and light that, in the phrase of Procopius, it seemed "to be suspended by a golden chain from heaven," the fine breadth of its harmonious proportions, the splendour of its facings of many-coloured marble, the brilliancy of its mosaics, the magnificent gold and silver work which enriched the iconostasis, ambo, and altar, the church built by Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus has throughout centuries excited the admiration of all beholders. If we consider its design, its enormous dome with a diameter of 107 feet, supported by four great arches which rest on four colossal piers, the two semi-domes which abut the central dome and are in their turn supported by three smaller apses, if we study the skilful combinations of equipoise which ensure the success of the work, we are overcome with amazement at this "marvel of stability and daring," this masterpiece of logical audacity and scientific knowledge. The magnificence of the decoration, the beauty of the lofty columns with their exquisite capitals, the many-coloured marbles so skilfully variegated as to give the illusion of Oriental carpets hung on the walls of the apse, and the dazzling effect of the mosaics with their background of dark blue and gold, complete the effect of magic splendour produced by St Sophia. Robbed though it has been since 1453 of its former magnificence, it still justifies the profound admiration which it excited from the time of Justinian until the last days of the Byzantine Empire. "Words worthy of it are not to be found," wrote an author of the fourteenth century, "and after we have spoken of it, we cannot speak of anything else." Another Byzantine writer declared that God must certainly have extended His mercy to Justinian, if only because he built St Sophia. And if we try to picture the great church as it was in former days on occasions of solemn ceremonial, when, amid clouds of incense, glowing candles, and the moving harmony of sacred chants, there was displayed the mystic pageant of ritual processions and the beauty of the Orthodox liturgy, the impression becomes even more marvellous. There is a legend that ambassadors from Vladímir, Great Prince of Kiev, imagined that in a vision they had seen the angels themselves descending from heaven to join with the Greek priests in celebrating Mass on the altar of St Sophia, and they could not resist the attraction of a religion in which such things were to be seen, "transcending, they said, human intelligence." Under the golden domes of Justinian's church, every

Byzantine experienced emotions of the same kind, as deep and as powerful, and his mystic and pious soul became marvellously exalted.

Constantinople, moreover, was full of churches and monasteries. There was the church of the Holy Apostles, with its five domes, an architectural masterpiece of the sixth century, from which St Mark's in Venice was copied at a later date ; here were buried ten generations of Emperors in sarcophagi of porphyry or marble. There was the New church (*Nea*), a basilica built in the ninth century by the Emperor Basil I, and the fine churches of the Comneni, the most famous of which, that of the Pantocrator, was from the twelfth century the St Denis of the monarchy. "In Constantinople," wrote one traveller, "there are as many churches as there are days in the year." To mention a few of those that still exist, there were St Irene and Little St Sophia (really the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus) which date from the sixth century, the church of the Theotokos (*Vefa-jāmi'*), which appears to date from the eleventh, and also the Pammakaristos (*Fethīye-jāmi'*) and the Chora (*Qahriye-jāmi'*), built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the latter of which still contains mosaics which are among the masterpieces of Byzantine art.

A singularly active and powerful religious life filled the Byzantine capital with its manifestations. Although in somewhat close dependence on the Emperor who appointed and deposed him at will, the Patriarch, a veritable Pope of the Eastern Church, was a power to be reckoned with in the State, especially when the holder of the office was a Photius, a Cerularius, or even a Polyeuctes or a Nicholas. The power of the Church was further increased by the great development in monasticism. We have already referred to the prominent part played in the Byzantine world by religious houses ; Constantinople was full of monasteries ; in like manner, outside the capital, in Egypt, in Palestine, and in Sinai during the fourth and fifth centuries, later, on Olympus in Bithynia, and on Latros in Caria, in the solitudes of Cappadocia, and—especially in the tenth century—on the Holy Mount of Athos, there was a marvellous expansion of monastic establishments. We know with what respect Byzantine society regarded the monks, and how great an influence they exercised in consequence. Moreover the monks became a real power, and sometimes one formidable to the State, because of the vast possessions which accumulated in their hands. Against this the Emperors—not only the iconoclasts, but even the orthodox—were obliged to wage a bitter and violent struggle. "The monks," said Nicephorus Phocas in a Novel, "possess none of the evangelical virtues ; at every moment of their existence they are only considering how to acquire more earthly possessions." But the monks were too powerful to be easily overthrown ; the State had to give way before the strong current, as it had often to yield to the turbulent outbursts organised in the monasteries, which penetrated even to the Sacred Palace, to present the grievances and claims of the Church. Vainly it endeavoured to reform the frequently relaxed discipline of the monas-

teries ; even the Church itself, led by men such as Christodulus of Patmos in the eleventh century, or Eustathius of Thessalonica in the twelfth, failed to attain this object. The Byzantine monks were extremely popular because of the miraculous powers and prophetic gifts which were attributed to them, the holy images and venerable relics of which their monasteries were the pious depositaries, their preaching and moral influence, their works of mercy and the schools clustered round their monasteries. On account of this popularity, of their fanaticism, and their spirit of independence, they were a perpetual source of trouble in Byzantine society, and a double danger—political and social—to the State. The important place held in the Byzantine world by the monastic institution is one of the most characteristic features of this vanished civilisation, and is the best proof of the essential importance within it of everything which concerned religion.

On the side of the hills that slope from the square of Atmeydān to the Sea of Marmora, close to St Sophia and the Hippodrome, were ranged the innumerable buildings which formed the imperial palace. Of this vast assemblage there now remain only ruins ; owing, however, to the descriptions left by Byzantine authors, above all in the *Ceremonies* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, it is easy to reconstruct its plan and picture its appearance. The Sacred Palace was indeed a city within a city ; from its builder, Constantine, until the twelfth century, almost every Emperor took pride in enlarging it, or improving it by some new addition. After the fire which accompanied the Nika riot, the vestibule of Chalce, which opened on the Augusteum, was magnificently rebuilt by Justinian. The Chrysotrichinium, a sumptuous throne-room, was erected in the midst of the gardens by Justin II, and, at the end of the seventh century, Justinian II connected it with the ancient palace by the long arcades of Lausiacus and Justinianus. In the ninth century Theophilus built the palace of Triconchus in imitation of Arab models, surrounding it with gardens and adding a number of elegant pavilions decorated with rare marbles and precious mosaics, which were known by picturesque titles, such as the Pearl, Love, or Harmony. A little later Basil I erected the new palace, or Caenurgium, close to the Chrysotrichinium ; Nicephorus Phocas added magnificent decorations to the maritime palace of Bucoleon, his favourite residence. Even in the twelfth century buildings were added within the grounds of the great Palace ; from this period dated the pavilion of Mouchroutas, "the Persian house," whose architecture was inspired by Seljūq models.

Thus, within high walls which after the tenth century bore the appearance of a fortress, the work of successive generations had produced a complicated assemblage of all kinds of buildings, great reception rooms and more private pavilions hidden among trees, palaces and barracks, baths and libraries, churches and prisons, long arcades and

terraces whence the eye could look far over the Sea of Marmora and the Bosphorus, wide stair-ways and magnificent landing-stages adorned with statues, gardens rich with flowers, trees, and running water, and large open spaces in which the Emperor played polo with his intimates. All this was laid out without symmetry or settled plan, but was full of charming fancy and of unparalleled magnificence. If we wish to form some idea of the Sacred Palace, we must not recall the noble and symmetrical façades of the Louvre and Versailles, but rather some Eastern palace, the Kremlin of the Tsars, or the Old Seraglio of the Sultans.

The resplendent luxury of the imperial apartments has often been described, and it is unnecessary to dwell for long on the precious marbles, mosaics, and gold; the gorgeous processions which passed every day through the lofty rooms hung with tapestries and strewn with flowers; the picturesque and glittering train of court officials, the magnificent ceremonial of the solemn audiences, receptions, and State dinners; and the thousand refinements of the precise and somewhat childish etiquette which regulated every act of the imperial life—the fairy-like setting of this court life, whose brilliant picture, worthy of the Arabian Nights, dazzled all the Middle Ages like a blaze of gold. In this magnificent setting, adorned with all the magic of art, within which passed the ostentatious and complicated life of the Emperor, everything was carefully calculated to enhance the sovereign majesty: whether by the luxury of splendid costumes, which for each fresh feast were of new form and colour, or by the pomp of the ceremonies which from the day of his birth to that of his death accompanied every act in the existence of the Basileus, and which rendered his life, as has been said, "a completely representative and pontifical life." On each of the great feasts of the Church, and on each solemn Saint's Day, the Emperor went to St Sophia, or to some other church in the capital, to be present in great state at the Divine Office. Then there were in the palace the civil festivities, daily processions, receptions, dinners, and audiences in which Byzantium took pride, in order to dazzle visitors and to display all her riches, magnificent jewels, precious tapestries, and splendid mosaics, multiplying lights and flowers, resplendent costumes, and gorgeous uniforms, and seeking even by magical illusions to astonish strangers. There were the feasts of the Dodecahemeron which lasted from Christmas till Epiphany, of the Brumalia, and many others, in which songs, dances, banquets, and performances by buffoons succeeded each other in an exact and complicated etiquette which left nothing to chance or fancy. And if we consider the busy, monotonous, and empty existence led by the Byzantine sovereign, and the crowd of courtiers who from morning till night, from one year's end to the other, seemed to have no object save to participate in this pompous puppet-show, we wonder whether indeed these people did not run a risk of developing, as was said by Taine,

"idiot minds," and whether the ruler who submitted to such a life of show was not in danger of losing all capacity and energy. But although there was certainly some monotony in the profusion of purple, precious stones, and gold which illuminated the imperial existence, and a good deal of futility in the etiquette which surrounded him, it must not be forgotten that Byzantium wished thereby to give to the world an impression of incomparable splendour, of dazzling wealth and luxury, and that she thereby succeeded in giving a particular stamp to the civilisation of which she was the brilliant centre.

In the twelfth century the Comneni left the former imperial residence and settled in a new one at the end of the Golden Horn. This was the palace of Blachernae, whose splendour was not less striking than that of the Great Palace. Strangers permitted to visit it have left us dazzling descriptions. Everywhere there were gold and precious stones, goldsmith's work and mosaics, and, writes a contemporary, "it is impossible to say which gave most value and beauty to things, the costliness of the material or the skill of the artist." Round the rulers of the Comnenian dynasty there moved an elegant and worldly court, less ceremonious than the former one, passionately interested in festivities, music, tourneys, art, and letters, full of intrigues and amorous adventures. And all this lent a singular attraction to the city. Travellers who came to Constantinople declared that "nothing like it can be found in any other country." But somewhat grave consequences arose from the essential place held in Byzantine society by the Sacred Palace and court life.

In an absolute monarchy, where everything depended on the ruler's favour, the palace was the centre of everything; and naturally, to gain or retain this favour, there was an atmosphere of perpetual intrigue round the prince. In this court full of eunuchs, women, and idle high dignitaries, there were intrigues incessantly and everywhere, alike in the Gynaecium, the barracks of the guards, and the Emperor's antechambers; every man fought for himself and sought to overthrow the reigning favourite, and any means were good, flattery or calumny, bribery or assassination. In dark corners was prepared the fall of the minister in power, nay even the fall of the Emperor himself. The history of the Sacred Palace is full of plots, murders, and *coups d'état*. And naturally in this court atmosphere there was scope for every kind of meanness, villainy, surrender of principle, recantation, and treachery. We must not indeed draw too black a picture. There were not only Emperordrones content to slumber in the ostentatious and empty life of the palace, but also rulers full of energy, determined to carry out their great task as leaders of the State both in the field and in the government; and there were more of the latter than is commonly thought. In strong contrast to the mean and worthless courtiers, there were in this society many worthy men, and alike in the Byzantine aristocracy and the bourgeoisie there was an accumulated treasure of strong qualities and

solid virtues. Nevertheless, even in the best of the Byzantines, there is visible a disquieting love for complication, subtlety, and intrigue, a way of contemplating and conducting life which suggests a certain amount of cunning, of prudent cleverness not overburdened with useless scruples, a weakness of character which contrasts with their superior intelligence. Court life greatly helped to develop this background of corruption and demoralisation, and to present a somewhat turbid picture of Byzantium, a picture of gorgeous luxury and excessive refinement, but of refinement in vice as well; shewing us amidst a marvellously enchanting setting a multitude of mediocre and worthless spirits, led by a few superior and evil geniuses.

Finally, in this elegant and ostentatious court, devoted to pleasure and feasting, in which women played a leading part, there was great corruption, and the imperial palace was the home of many startling adventures and wide-spread scandals. In spite of the apparently severe seclusion in which the life of the Empress was passed, in spite of the retinue of eunuchs by which the approaches to the Gynaecium were guarded, Byzantine history is full of Empresses who played a leading part in State affairs or in society. They were granted a great place in palace festivities by ceremonial custom; the political constitution of the monarchy, which did not exclude women from the throne, bestowed on them an official position in the government at the side of the Emperor; several Byzantine Empresses by their high ability succeeded in gaining powerful influence and playing the part of a statesman. To appreciate the active part they took in directing political affairs, it is only necessary to recall the names of Theodora and Irene, of Theophano and Eudocia Macrembolitissa; or to realise what Byzantine society owed to their luxury, elegance, and spirit of intrigue, we may conjure up the figures of Zoë Porphyrogenita, Mary of Antioch, or the princesses, of such varied character, of the Comnenian family. Their morality was frequently doubtful, but their talent and culture were often eminent; and as they shared all the tastes of the period, alike for religion and for the Hippodrome, as they were as intriguing and ambitious as the men, they helped to bestow a characteristic stamp on Byzantine society. And from the imperial palace this love of intrigue so necessary for success, this openly flaunted corruption, spread throughout all classes of society.

Round the palace there revolved a whole noble society, powerful alike by the high offices with which its members were invested and the territorial wealth they possessed; from it were drawn the intimates of the Emperor, his counsellors, ministers, officials, and generals; it was called the *Senatorial Order* (*συγκλητικοί*). We can most easily judge of Byzantine social life and luxury from these great aristocratic families. Though we know little about Byzantine dwellings, it may be said that, up to the time of the Crusades, they were constructed on the plan of the houses of antiquity; those which still exist in the dead cities of Central

Syria contain courts surrounded by porticoes, baths, and large gardens round the central edifice ; in miniatures we see buildings of two or three stories, with gabled, terraced, or domed roofs ; their façades, decorated with porticoes and flanked by towers or pavilions, were often adorned with balconies or loggias. The internal decorations seem to have been extremely luxurious. The rooms were lined with marble and decorated with mosaics or paintings ; they were furnished with sumptuous articles made of wood inlaid with metal, mother-of-pearl, or ivory, covered with magnificent tapestries embroidered with religious subjects or fantastic animals. The luxury of the table was great, and still more that of costume. The forms of classical attire had been retained, but the influence of the East had added great extravagance, and, moreover, certain new fashions had been introduced from neighbouring peoples, which soon lent singular diversity to Byzantine costume. Its characteristic feature was extraordinary magnificence. Only garments of silk or purple were worn, tissues embroidered with gold which fell in stiff, straight folds, and materials embellished with embroideries and priceless jewels. There was no less extravagance in horses and carriages, and moralists such as St John Chrysostom in the fifth century, or Theodore of Studion in the ninth, severely criticised the excessive expenditure of their contemporaries. The period of the Crusades somewhat altered the character of this luxury, without diminishing it. Magnificence was always one of the characteristic features of Byzantine life ; it is what strikes us first in the pictures of this vanished world preserved for us in mosaics and miniatures, both in the brilliant pictures which in San Vitale at Ravenna represent Justinian and Theodora in the midst of their court, and in the sumptuous portraits of emperors and empresses, ministers and great dignitaries, which illustrate manuscripts.

It was said for long and is still often repeated that the whole history of Byzantium is summed up in the quarrels of the Greens and Blues. However exaggerated this statement may be, it is certain that up to the twelfth century the games in the circus were among the favourite pleasures of the Byzantine world ; so much so that it has truly been said of the Hippodrome that it was indeed "the mirror of Greek society in the Middle Ages." From the Emperor down to the meanest of his subjects, Byzantium devoted a passionate attention to everything which concerned the Circus, and women were no less keenly interested than men in the spectacles of the Hippodrome, the success of the fashionable charioteers, and the struggles between the factions. "The ardour which in the circus inflames men's minds with extraordinary passion is a marvellous thing," says a writer of the sixth century. "Should the green charioteer take the lead, half the people are in despair ; should the blue one outstrip his rival, at once half the city is in mourning. Men who have no stake in the matter give vent to frenzied abuse ; men who have suffered no

hurt feel gravely injured ; for a mere nothing people come to blows, as though it were a question of saving the country from danger." The gravest of men declared that without the theatre and the hippodrome "life were totally devoid of joy," and an Emperor who was a good psychologist wrote: "We must have games to amuse the people."

Consequently the societies which organised the games in the Circus, the famous factions of Greens and Blues, were recognised corporations of public utility, with their presidents or *demeuchs*, their leaders of the regions, their funds, their places in official ceremonies, in fact a complete organisation—in the form of a kind of urban militia—which put arms in their hands and rendered them powerful and frequently dangerous. The whole people ranged itself on one side or the other, according to the colour favoured, and the Emperor himself took sides passionately in the struggle between the rival factions ; so that the rivalries of the Circus very often assumed a political aspect, and spread from the Hippodrome to the State. The Atmeydān in Constantinople still marks the site and retains the shape of the Byzantine Circus, where, in the magnificent arena, along the *spina* decorated with lofty columns and statues, the charioteers urged their horses down the track, and where the people thrilled with excitement at the thousand spectacles—animal-hunting, combats between men and wild beasts, the feats of acrobats, and the fooling of clowns—lavished by imperial liberality. But the Hippodrome was much more than this. It was also the scene of solemn triumphs, when under the eyes of the people there passed some victorious general, followed by a train of illustrious prisoners and a display of the wealth taken from a conquered world. Here also was the scene of public executions, which gratified the taste for cruelty and blood always existent in the Byzantine populace. But it was still something more. It took the place of the ancient Forum as one of the centres of public life. Here, and here only, the people could give vent to their feelings, their spirit of opposition and discontent, and here they retained their right to hiss or applaud anyone, even the Emperor. In the Circus the new Basileus came for the first time in contact with his people ; in the Circus there sometimes occurred—as, for instance, at the beginning of the Nika riot—really tragic scenes, the prelude to mutiny or revolution ; in the Circus, amid the execrations of the people, there sometimes closed the existence of the dethroned and tortured Emperor. For over two hundred years, from the fifth to the seventh century, the factions of the Circus maintained a profound and ceaseless agitation in the Byzantine State ; they were in the forefront of all the insurrections, all the revolutions, in which the Hippodrome was often the battlefield or the chief fortress. The government indeed gradually succeeded in taming the factions ; it appointed as their leaders *democrats*, who were great officers of the crown ; and they became more and more official corporations, which on the days of great ceremony lined the streets on the sovereign's way and greeted

him with their rhythmic acclamations. But, although less formidable to the State, the games of the Hippodrome were no less dear to the people, and the population of the capital still remained a source of constant preoccupation to the imperial government.

It was not an easy matter to keep the peace in this cosmopolitan multitude, constantly augmented by the undesirables who flocked from the provinces to the capital, an idle populace, impressionable, restless, turbulent, and discontented, which passed with equal facility from cheers to abuse, from enjoyment to mutiny, from enthusiasm to discouragement. Agitators found it easy to exert an influence over this superstitious and devout populace, always ready to believe the prophecies of soothsayers or the miracles of the holy images, and to credit all the rumours, false or true, which were abroad in the city. In a few hours the multitude became excited and infuriated; they were passionately interested in religious and political questions, and under the leadership of the monks who directed them, or of politicians who made use of them, they often imposed their will on the palace. Eager for gossip, they delighted in pamphlets, in abuse, in brawling and idle opposition. Moreover there was much corruption in the city. Houses of ill-fame established themselves at the very church doors; in the police orders are recorded the impious blasphemies, the rage for gambling, the licentious morals, the affrays which constantly took place in drinking-booths, and the consequent necessity of closing the latter at seven o'clock in the evening, the number of thieves, and the insecurity of the streets during the night. "If Constantinople," said a writer of the twelfth century, "surpasses all other cities in wealth, she also surpasses them in vice." Thus it was a hard task for the Prefect of the City, entrusted with the policing of the capital, to maintain order in this fickle, passionate, bloodthirsty, and ferocious crowd, always ready to blame the Emperor when dissatisfied with anything. Exempt from all taxation, the populace were fed by the government, who distributed bread, wine, and oil gratuitously, and it was no small matter to ensure supplies for the enormous capital, to regulate exactly the arrival of wheat from Egypt, as was done by Justinian, to supervise, as is shown by the *Book of the Prefect* at the end of the ninth century, the making of bread and the sale of fish and meat. Then the populace had to be amused by games in the circus, and by dazzling pomps and ceremonies, which thus became means of government. Above all it had to be mastered, sometimes severely, by bloody repression. Nevertheless imperial authority had often to yield when popular fury was unchained. From the twelfth century onwards, we even find the dregs of the Byzantine people, the poorer classes of the great cities, becoming organised to give voice to their demands, and for social struggles; the history of the "Naked" (*γυμνοί*) in Corfu in the twelfth century, and that of the "Zealots" in Thessalonica in the fourteenth, betray a vague tendency towards a communistic movement.

III.

But Constantinople was also a great industrial and commercial town.

Between the square of the Augusteum and that of the Taurus, all along the great street of the Mese, there stretched the quarter of the bazaars. Here were exhibited in great quantity the products of the luxury trades, sumptuous materials in bright colours embroidered richly in gold, a monopoly jealously guarded for themselves by the Byzantines; wonderful specimens of the goldsmith's art; jewels glittering with rubies and pearls; bronzes inlaid with silver; enamels cloisonné in gold; delicately carved ivories; icons of mosaic—in fact everything in the way of rare and refined luxury known to the Middle Ages. There, at work under the porticoes in the open air, might be seen the innumerable craftsmen of Byzantine industry, jewellers, skinners, saddlers, wax-chandlers, bakers, etc., the tables of the money-changers heaped with coin, the stalls of the grocers who sold meat and salt fish, flour and cheese, vegetables, oil, butter, and honey in the street; and the stalls of the perfume-sellers, set up in the very square of the Palace, at the foot of a venerable icon, the Christ of the Chalce, "in order," says a document at the end of the ninth century, "to perfume the sacred image as is fitting, and to impart charm to the palace vestibule." And it is evident how much all this resembles the Eastern colour still apparent in present-day Stamboul. Farther on, close to the Long Portico, between the Forum of Constantine and the Taurus, was the quarter of the silk and linen merchants, where each branch of the trade had its own place. In the Taurus and the Strategion were sold sheep and pigs, in the Amastrianon horses; on the quays of the Golden Horn was the fish-market. And all day long in the bazaars of the main street, an active and incessant movement of business was kept up by an animated, noisy, and cosmopolitan crowd.

The industrial corporations were each hedged round by very strict administrative regulations. Constantinople in the Middle Ages was, as has been said, "the paradise of monopoly, privilege, and protection." There was no liberty of labour. Under the superintendence of the Prefect of the City, the various trades were organised in hermetically closed gilds, minutely regulated in everything concerning membership, wages, methods of manufacture, conditions of work, and prices. Industrial life was watched over in every detail by government officials, often very inquisitorial in their methods. On the other hand, these gilds were protected by severe measures limiting or suppressing foreign competition. In the *Book of the Prefect*, an ordinance dating from the reign of Leo VI, we see the essential features of this economic system, and also the nature of the most important of these gilds, which is worthy of note. Some of them were occupied in provisioning the capital, others in building, as was natural in a great city where many edifices were under construction.

Most were employed in manufacturing articles of luxury, and this was indeed the characteristic feature of Byzantine industry, which was essentially a luxury-industry. Finally, the money market, represented by the very numerous money-changers and bankers, who were highly respected in Constantinople, naturally held a prominent position in a city which was one of the great markets of the world.

By her geographical position, situated as she was at the point of contact between the East and the West, Constantinople was the great emporium in which the commerce of the world became centralised. Through Syria and by the Red Sea the Empire was in communication with the Far East; and either directly, or by way of the Persians, and later of the Arabs, it came into touch with Ceylon and China. Through the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, spices, aromatic essences, and precious stones reached it from Central Asia. Towards the North trade-routes extended even to the Scandinavians and the Russians, who supplied Byzantium with furs, honey, wax, and slaves. The Byzantine merchants, Syrians, especially in the fifth and sixth centuries, and Armenians penetrated to Africa, Italy, Spain, and Gaul. Until the eleventh century the Byzantine merchant marine, under the protection of the imperial fleet, dominated the Mediterranean. Merchandise from the whole world poured into the markets of the capital. Paul the Silentary, a poet of the sixth century, pleasantly describes the trading vessels of the universe sailing full of hope towards the queenly city, and even the winds conspiring to bring the goods which enriched her citizens. There was therefore ceaseless activity all day long in the port, alike near the Golden Horn and on the shores of the Propontis. Thither Asiatics from Trebizond and Chaldia brought their spices and perfumes, Syrians and Arabs their sumptuous silken robes and their carpets, merchants from Pontus and Cerasus their cloth, Russians their salt fish, caviar, salt, and furs, and Bulgarians their flax and honey. Western merchants, first of all from Amalfi and Venice, later from Pisa and Genoa, as well as Catalans and "Celts from beyond the Alps," played an ever-increasing part in this great business activity. From the tenth century there were special places reserved for the warehouses and colonies of the Venetians along the Golden Horn, and from the thirteenth century for the Genoese at Galata. By the liberality of the Emperors, they secured substantial reductions on the custom-house dues levied on the ingress and egress to the Dardanelles, as well as important privileges for their compatriots, and thus, from the twelfth century, they gradually became masters of all the trade of the capital, to the great discontent of the Byzantines. The economic policy of the Emperors contributed not a little to this result; Byzantium shewed scanty interest in opening commercial channels and conducting her own export trade, but took pride in seeing all the world meet on the shores of the Bosphorus, to seek precious merchandise and bring their gold. The inevitable consequence was that, in the rich market

of the East, Byzantium insensibly allowed herself to be supplanted by younger and more active nations. But, in spite of this mistaken policy, Constantinople nevertheless remained throughout centuries "a great business centre," to quote the expression of Benjamin of Tudela, "whither merchants come from all countries of the world," a marvellously prosperous and wealthy city. It has been calculated that, in the twelfth century, in the city of Constantinople alone, the Emperors received from shop-rents, and market and custom-dues, the enormous annual revenue of 7,300,000 *solidi* of gold.

Finally Constantinople was a great intellectual city.

We have already alluded to the fact that, in spite of all she owed to contact with the East and to the influence of Christianity, Byzantine civilisation had remained imbued with the spirit of antiquity. In no other place in the medieval world had the classical tradition been retained so completely as in Byzantium, in no other place had direct contact with Hellenism been so well maintained. Politically, the Byzantine Empire could indeed claim the name of Rome and to be her heir, intellectually she was firmly rooted in the fertile soil of ancient Greece. In the rest of medieval Europe Greek was a foreign language, which was difficult to learn and which even the most eminent intellects for long found hard to understand. In Byzantium Greek was the national language; and this fact alone was enough to bestow on Byzantine civilisation an absolutely different aspect from that of other medieval civilisations. There, it was never necessary to discover Greek antiquity anew.

The Byzantine libraries were richly endowed with all the wealth of Greek literature, and in them there existed many works of which we have only preserved the title and the bare memory. The nature and extent of reading shewn in the works of Byzantine authors prove no less what close contact Byzantium had kept with the classical masterpieces. Greek literature was the very foundation of Byzantine education. An important place was indeed reserved for the Scriptures, the works of the Fathers, the lives of saints, and sometimes also for mathematics and music; but grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, the perusal and annotation of the classical masterpieces, were its essential features. Every cultivated person had studied Homer, "the all-wise Homer," as he was called by Tzetzes, and not only Homer but Hesiod and Pindar, the tragic poets and Aristophanes, historians such as Thucydides and Polybius, orators such as Demosthenes, the treatises of Aristotle and the dialogues of Plato, as well as Theocritus, Plutarch, Libanius, and Lucian. When we consider the extent of learning shewn by an imperial princess such as Anna Comnena, who prided herself on having studied "Hellenism from end to end," or by a man of high descent such as Photius, or by a lettered member of the middle class such as Michael Psellus, we

realise what were the character and extent of this education throughout all classes of society. From the ninth to the fourteenth century the schools of Constantinople were renowned throughout the whole world, in the Arab East as in the Latin West. An author of the thirteenth century has left a picturesque sketch of the eager life led there—very like that led in the Musulman universities of the present day—and of the subtle arguments which went on all day long in the school of the Holy Apostles, between grammarians and dialecticians, doctors, mathematicians, and musicians. But above all the University of Constantinople was the incomparable home of the classical tradition.

Founded in the fifth century by the Emperor Theodosius II, reconstituted in the ninth century in the palace of Magnaura by Caesar Bardas, protected with careful solicitude by the Emperors of the tenth century, the University was an admirable school of philosophy and science. The "masters of the rhetors," who were alike grammarians, philologists, and humanists, lectured on the texts of the poets, historians, and orators of ancient Greece. The "consuls of the philosophers" studied Aristotle and Plato, and from the eleventh century onwards teachers such as Psellus and John Italus preluded that Platonic renaissance which was to be the glory of the fifteenth century in Italy. Men of science, mathematicians, astronomers, and naturalists rendered services comparable, as is declared by a good judge, to those rendered by Roger Bacon in the West. The School of Law, which had been so flourishing in the days of Justinian, was reorganised in the eleventh century. Medicine was the object of learned research. But education was mainly based on the study of the classical masterpieces. In the eleventh century Psellus interpreted the ancient texts with an enthusiasm for Athens which betrayed itself in striking and charming touches. In the twelfth century Eustathius of Thessalonica wrote commentaries on Homer and Pindar. The great professors of the days of the Palaeologi, such as Planudes, Moschopulus, and Triclinius, were admirable philologists inspired already with the spirit of humanism. Round them there flocked students drawn from every part of the Empire, and also from the Arab world and from the distant West; the success of their teaching was prodigious and its influence profound. The whole of Byzantine society in its literary tastes and its writings seems to have been imbued with the spirit of antiquity. The language used by most of the great Byzantine authors is a learned, almost artificial, language, entirely modelled on the classical masterpieces, and quite unrelated to the spoken tongue, which came to approximate more and more to its modern form. And from all this there arose a remarkable movement of thought of which Byzantine literature is the significant expression.

This is not the place in which to write the history of Byzantine literature. To indicate the position it occupied in the civilisation of the Empire, it will be enough to mention its different periods, its

principal tendencies, and to describe the general features which characterised it.

In the history of ideas, as in the history of art and in political history, the sixth century was a brilliant and fruitful period, still imbued with Hellenic influence, which in history as in poetry and eloquence still appeared to be continuing the development of classical Greek literature. The grave crisis through which the Empire passed between the seventh and ninth centuries caused a notable slackening in the intellectual movement; literature then assumed an almost exclusively ecclesiastical character; this was undoubtedly the feeblest period in the history of thought in Byzantium. But after the middle of the ninth century, contact being restored with the ancient culture, a renaissance came about, simultaneously with the political renaissance experienced by the Empire under the government of the princes of the Macedonian family, and with the renaissance of art, likewise inspired by the classical tradition. The tenth century appears especially as an era of scientists and learned men, intent on compiling in vast encyclopaedias an inventory of all the intellectual riches inherited from the past. On these foundations later generations were to build. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were a period of extraordinary brilliancy in history, philosophy, and eloquence. And notwithstanding the crisis of 1204, this great activity of thought lasted until the days of the Palaeologi when, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, both Byzantine literature and Byzantine art experienced an ultimate renaissance, as though, on the eve of the final catastrophe, Byzantium had gathered all her energies in a last magnificent expansion.

At every period in this great movement of ideas, history was the favourite form of expression of Byzantine thought, and in this, and in religious poetry, we find the most remarkable manifestation of the Byzantine genius. To shew the prodigious wealth and infinite variety of this class of literature it will be enough to recall the names of its most famous representatives: in the sixth century Procopius, Agathias, and Menander; in the tenth Constantine Porphyrogenitus and Leo Diaconus; in the eleventh Psellus and Michael Attaliates; in the twelfth Nicephorus Bryennius, Anna Comnena, Cinnamus, and Nicetas; in the thirteenth Acropolita and Pachymeres; in the fourteenth Nicephorus Gregoras and John Cantacuzene; and finally, in the fifteenth, Chalcondyles, Ducas, Phrantzes, and Critobulus. In addition there were chroniclers, such as Malalas in the sixth century; Theophanes and Nicephorus at the end of the eighth; George Monachus and Simeon Magister in the tenth; Scylitzes in the eleventh; and Cedrenus and Zonaras in the twelfth. If we compare some of these great historians with their contemporaries in the Latin West, we shall recognise that the Greeks are on an undoubtedly higher intellectual plane, by their political insight, the delicacy of their psychology, their sense of composition, and

the quality of their language. And there are some of them, for instance Psellus, who by the picturesque precision of their descriptions, their acuteness of observation, and the raciness and humour of their style, are equal to the greatest in any literature.

This was partly because all these writers had behind them a long tradition by which they were inspired. In Byzantium history was closely allied to the classical past ; in like manner theology, which, with history, was the subject which undoubtedly most interested Byzantine thought, was always dominated by the Christian past. Here again, to shew the abundance of their literature, it will be enough to mention a few names : Leontius of Neapolis in the sixth century ; John Damascenus and Theodore of Studion in the eighth ; Photius in the ninth ; Psellus in the eleventh ; Euthymius Zigabenus, Nicholas of Methone, and Nicetas Acominatus in the twelfth ; during the last centuries of the Empire the great representatives of Eastern mysticism, Palamas and the two Cabasilas, and the followers of Western scholastic philosophy, Gregory Acyndinus, Demetrius Cydones, and Nicephorus Gregoras ; and in the fifteenth century the adversaries and the friends of the Latins, Marcus Eugenicus, George Scholarius, and Bessarion. There were also the hagiographic writers whose work was summed up in the tenth century in the vast collection of Simeon Metaphrastes ; and the masters of religious eloquence, whose most famous representatives—Photius in the ninth century, Eustathius of Thessalonica and Michael Acominatus in the twelfth—were greatly superior to most of the contemporary Western preachers. And here again it is an undoubted fact that this theological literature was, as a whole, at least until the twelfth century, greatly superior to anything similar produced by the West.

However, the powerful influence exerted on all minds by the classical or Christian past was not without drawbacks. The constant effort to adhere to classical models bestowed a singularly artificial style on historical writing. The incessant fear felt by theologians lest they should depart from the tradition of the Fathers deprived their ideas of much originality and freedom, especially after the middle of the ninth century. In spite, however, of these shackles, Byzantium was sometimes capable of creative work. It is the immortal glory of Michael Psellus that in the eleventh century he restored the Platonic doctrine to its place in education, and he inaugurated a movement of free thought which was a source of serious disquietude to the Church ; and it was likewise by means of Byzantines—Gennadius, Gemistus Plethon, and Bessarion—that, in the fifteenth century, the West became acquainted with Platonic thought. It is the immortal glory of Romanus, "*le premier des mélodes*," that, at the dawn of the sixth century, by his hymns full of ardent inspiration, heartfelt sincerity, and intense dramatic power, he created that school of religious poetry which is indeed the most personal expression of the Byzantine genius. It is the glory of the philologists of the fourteenth

century that, as we have seen, they initiated the great movement towards humanism. Many other instances might be cited to shew alike the variety and creative power of this literature. It must however be admitted that as a whole, in spite of the real talent of many of its writers, it often lacks freshness, spontaneity, and life, and that, being almost the exclusive property of the learned, it very quickly became more and more unintelligible to the mass of the Greek people.

It was exactly for this reason that, little by little, the spoken language found a place in literature, and here a masterpiece made its appearance. This was the popular epic, a cycle of *chansons de geste*, of which the poem of Digenes Akritas is the most celebrated example, and which about the eleventh century collected round the name of some national hero. In this epic poetry, as in religious poetry, Byzantium owed nothing to ancient models. Its form and language were new, it had its roots in the depths of the Byzantine soul, the Christian soul of the people; thence it derived its freshness of inspiration and of thought. It also proves, with other works, that in spite of its close dependence on the past, in spite of the learned and artificial style which it too often assumed, Byzantine literature, alike by the free circulation of ideas which it exhibits and the creative originality which it often displayed, deserves a place in the history of Byzantine civilisation.

Byzantine art was one of the most brilliant expressions of Byzantine civilisation, and also one of the most characteristic. Everywhere in it we find that love of stupendous luxury and of prodigious splendour which Byzantium displayed at every period of her history. In the decoration of churches and palaces it is always the same story—precious marbles, glittering mosaics, magnificent work in gold and silver, and wonderful hangings, all intended to enhance the beauty of the rites of religion, and the majesty of the imperial person; in public and private life nothing but sumptuous tissues shot with purple and gold, finely carved ivories, bronzes inlaid with silver, richly illuminated manuscripts, enamels cloisonné in resplendent colours, gold and silver plate, and costly jewels. Whether, by decorating the walls of churches with the pageant of sacred history skilfully disposed, this art was intent on glorifying God, on expressing an article of faith, on interpreting the liturgical rites, or whether, to glorify the majesty of the sovereign and to give pleasure to the court and to the grandes, it was depicting in a more profane spirit subjects borrowed from classical history or mythology, picturesque scenes dear to Hellenistic art, as well as historical paintings, representations of imperial victories, and portraits of the princes in their glory, everywhere we find that love of magnificence which even to-day makes us visualise Byzantium in a jewelled iridescence, in a shimmer of gold.

It must not, however, be thought that, as is too often said, this art was a lifeless and monotonous one, incapable of transformation or

renewal. Like Byzantine literature it remained, indeed, firmly attached to classical tradition and constantly returned to classical models for fresh sources of inspiration and occasionally for fresh methods. Like the whole of Byzantine civilisation it had, indeed, been greatly influenced by the East, and had thence derived a taste for realism and colour, and it had received an even deeper imprint from Christianity, which, while using it for the service of the Church, also brought it under her guardianship and subjection. Because of all this, and also because it was essentially an official art, Byzantine art often lacked freshness, spontaneity, and life; it was often both an imitation and a copy; in its excessive attachment to tradition, and docility to the Church, it too often and too quickly translated its most fertile discoveries into immutable formulas. Nevertheless the fact remains that this art shewed itself capable of creation, that at least twice in the course of its thousand years' existence it succeeded in regaining a new vigour and experiencing an unlooked-for revival, and that by combining the various tendencies under whose influence it had come it succeeded in assuming an original form "responding to the real genius of the people."

Justinian's reign marks the decisive moment when, after a long period of preparation and experiment, Byzantine art found its definitive formula and at the same time attained its apogee. "At this moment," says Choisy with much discrimination, "the evolution was complete. All the methods of construction were fixed, all types of buildings had been produced and were being applied at the same time, without exclusion or prejudice; the polygonal design found new life in St Sergius at Constantinople and San Vitale at Ravenna; the basilican form recurs in the church of the Mother of God in Jerusalem; the cruciform plan with five domes appears in the reconstruction of the church of the Holy Apostles; St Sophia in Salonica presents the type of a church with a central dome, of which the churches of Athos and Greece are only variants." Finally, St Sophia at Constantinople, a marvel of science and audacity, is the original and magnificent masterpiece of the new style. In these buildings, so varied in type and plan, in which the creative fertility of Byzantine art shews itself, a sumptuous decoration clothes the walls with many-coloured marbles and dazzling mosaics with backgrounds of blue and gold, such as are to be seen in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo or in San Vitale at Ravenna, and at Parenzo in Istria, or such as could be seen at St Demetrius in Salonica before the fire of 1917. These same tendencies—love of luxury, and a combination of the classical spirit and Eastern realism—are revealed in all the works of this period, in the miniatures which illustrate the Genesis and the Dioscorides in Vienna, the Joshua and the Cosmas at the Vatican, the Bible of Florence, the Gospels of Rossano, in the ivories, and in the tissues; everywhere we find this striving after decorative effect, this love for brilliant colours, this eagerness for pomp and majesty, which bestow such imposing beauty on the monuments of this age.

This was the first golden age of Byzantine art. But this great effort was no transitory one. After the iconoclastic crisis, there was a magnificent revival from the tenth to the twelfth century in the days of the Macedonian Emperors and the Comneni. Under the influence of the recovered classical and secular tradition Byzantium then experienced a marvellous efflorescence of art. Unfortunately nothing is left of the Imperial Palace, nor of the *Nea*, the "New" basilica which was one of the masterpieces of the new style. But the little churches in Constantinople, Salonica, and Greece are enough to shew how Byzantine architects succeeded in making charming and ingenious variations on the plan of a Greek cross, and how they sought inspiration sometimes in simple lines, sometimes in harmonious complexity, in the picturesque effects taught by the Hellenistic tradition or in the austere and grave ideal, with large masses and firm lines, derived from the Eastern tradition. The mosaics of St Luke in Phocis and of Daphni in Attica in their admirable blending of colour and decorative effect reveal the skilful arrangement of this iconography, an achievement alike artistic and theological, which devoted profound thought to the inspiration and scheme of the decorations in sacred edifices, and which was one of the most remarkable creations of the Byzantine genius. The same mastery is visible in the beautiful manuscripts illuminated for the Emperors, the *Gregory Nazianzen* and the *Psalter of Paris*, the *Menologium* in the Vatican, the *Psalter of Venice*, and in all the examples of the minor arts, such as ivory triptychs, reliquaries or bindings set with enamels, the figured or embroidered silken stuffs. No doubt during this second golden age, under the influence of theology, art sacrificed a great deal to decorum, to discipline, and to respect for tradition. Nevertheless there is evident, especially in the imperial and secular art of which there remain only too few examples, a search for the picturesque, an often realistic observation of life, and a feeling for colour, which shew a continual desire for renewal, and foreshadow the evolution whence was derived the last renaissance of Byzantine art during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The mosaics of Qahriye-jāmi‘, the frescoes at Mistra, the churches in Athos, Macedonia, Serbia, and Russia bear witness to the marvellous expansion which Byzantine art experienced in the days of the Palaeologi. Once again Byzantine art was transformed; it became living, picturesque, dramatic, emotional, and charming; its iconography became enriched and renewed itself, more pathetic and more impassioned; its skilful and harmonious use of colour seems almost impressionistic. Schools were formed and works comparable to the creations of the Italian Primitives were produced.

In the course of its thousand years' history, the Byzantine monarchy experienced many unexpected and striking revivals, in which, according to the phrase of one chronicler, "that old mother, the Empire, appeared like a young girl adorned with gold and precious stones." Byzantine art

underwent similar experiences ; it also became transformed and renovated. And Constantinople, which, as Rambaud has justly remarked, was more than once in the course of her long history herself the whole Empire, and which, on the very brink of the catastrophe which threatened destruction, succeeded in striking out a path of salvation and renewed life, likewise represents by the monuments which are preserved the evolution and greatness of Byzantine art. St Sophia and the other monuments of Justinian's reign, the charming churches of the period of the Macedonians and the Comneni, and the mosaics of Qahriye-jāmi‘, testify to the splendour and the transformations of this art, and, in spite of the loss of so many other monuments, are enough to shew what a marvellously artistic city she was, and why for centuries she appeared as the real centre of the civilised world.

IV.

Constantinople was not the only great city in the Empire. All round the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean, at the termini of the known and frequented trade-routes, flourishing towns were to be found, active centres of exchange, at which were gathered the merchants and merchandise of the whole world. Among them, until the seventh century when they were taken from the Empire by the Arab conquest, were Alexandria in Egypt and the Syrian ports. Later there were the great cities of Asia Minor, Tarsus, Ephesus, Smyrna, Phocaea, and Trebizond, which last was from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century to be the capital of a powerful state. In Europe there was Thessalonica, which was, after Constantinople, the most important economic centre of the European provinces and which boasted that it was particularly dear to the Emperor's heart. There, every year at the end of October, on the occasion of the feast of St Demetrius, the patron and celestial protector of the city, was held a famous fair in the plain of the Vardar, to which for business transactions there resorted Greeks and Slavs, Italians and Spaniards, " Celts from beyond the Alps," and men who came from the distant shores of the Atlantic. In this great city of commerce and wealth, sumptuous churches testified to the riches of the inhabitants and their love of magnificence ; of these the most famous was the basilica of St Demetrius. In many provinces of the Empire, a flourishing industry was engaged in the manufacture of those articles of luxury which were the glory of Byzantine work-shops. Thebes, Corinth, and Patras were famous for their silks ; Thessalonica was renowned for its activity in the arts of smelting and metal-work. Heavy gold brocade, magnificent silken stuffs dyed in dark violet or in bright purple and covered with embroidery, fine linens, marvellous goldsmith's work, cloisonné enamel, elegant glass-work, all came from the hands of Byzantine artisans. And it was to this industrial and commercial activity that the Byzantine Empire,

the economic centre of the Eastern world, owed long centuries of prodigious wealth.

This was not, however, the most original and noteworthy feature which Byzantine civilisation presented in the provinces. All through the Empire, but especially in the Asiatic provinces, were to be found vast domains whose proprietors, with their retinue of clients, vassals, and soldiers, led an entirely feudal existence on their estates. Very early, both in the Byzantine East and in the Latin West, a twofold social phenomenon was observable. In the general insecurity of a troubled time the obscure, the poor, and the weak sought the patronage (*patronum*) of some powerful and wealthy neighbour, and in return for the advantages they reaped from this protection, they bartered their liberty and became the clients and vassals of the great noble who was to defend them. On the other hand the great landowners, the “powerful” (*δυνατοί*) as they were called, made use of their power to increase their lands at the expense of the small landholders; and thus small independent holdings disappeared at the same time as the freemen.

On the enormous estates which thus came into existence lived those great feudal families whose names fill Byzantine history. In Asia there were the Phocas, Scleri, Dalasseni, Ducas, Comneni, and Palaeologi; in Europe the Bryennii, Melisseni, Cantacuzenes, and many others. Very rich from the lands they possessed and which they were constantly augmenting by their usurpations, very powerful from the number of clients and vassals whom they collected round them, they added to these causes of influence the prestige of the high offices which the Emperor entrusted to them, and they increased their riches by the salaries and endowments which the government distributed among them. It was amongst these great nobles indeed that the Basileus found his best servants and his most illustrious generals. But, in spite of the services it rendered, this landed aristocracy created a formidable danger for the Empire. A serious social question arose from the ninth century onwards in the Byzantine world confronted by the two classes, the “powerful” (*δυνατοί*) and the “poor” (*πένητες*).

The disappearance of the free peasant had the effect of robbing the State of taxable material, necessary for a satisfactory state of the finances; the disappearance of the small freeholds, especially of those military fiefs which the Emperors had established as one of the bases of recruiting, robbed the army, of which the hardy peasants were the essential nucleus, of its best soldiers. To defend the small holdings and the middle class of small peasant proprietors, and to check the usurpations of the “powerful,” the Emperors of the ninth and tenth centuries struggled energetically and even violently with the great feudal barons, and for a time, during the reign of Basil II, it seemed as though they had conquered. But it was only in appearance. From the eleventh century the aristocracy raised its head once more and took its revenge. When, at the beginning

of the thirteenth century, the Latins conquered the Byzantine Empire, they easily identified the Greek *archon* with the Western baron, and the peasant tied to the land (*πάροικος*) with the *villeins* they had at home. And indeed the place occupied in this apparently absolute monarchy by feudalism was not the least curious nor the least surprising thing in the history of Byzantium.

Nor was this all. By the fact of regional recruiting, the soldiers who were placed under the command of these great nobles in the army were very often their clients and vassals in civil life; they knew their leaders, their illustrious descent, their wealth, and their exploits; they appreciated their liberality and the value of their protection. These soldiers therefore displayed whole-hearted devotion and fidelity to their generals; they obeyed these leaders whom they admired much more readily than the distant Emperor. Moreover, although the great barons were generally faithful subjects, they were always unruly ones; they treated the Emperor almost as an equal; they considered that they had a right to give him advice, and were very much surprised if he did not follow it in every particular. Finally, a firm solidarity arising from community of interests, reinforced by numerous family marriages and maintained by a common life of exploits and dangers, united the members of this aristocracy. Entrenched in their impregnable castles, proud of their wealth, their popularity, and their prestige, these great feudal lords were therefore quite naturally inclined to lay down the law to the Emperor, to express their dissatisfaction, or to manifest their ambition by formidable insurrections. The second half of the tenth century was full of these great feudal insurrections, with which are associated the names of Bardas Phocas and Bardas Sclerus, and which caused such serious trouble to the Byzantine Empire. There we see what close bonds of devotion and fidelity united the great barons and the men of their native province, how community of interests and of sentiments made all these *archons* into one caste, and what proud and magnificent figures were produced by this aristocratic Byzantine society.

The epic of Digenes Akritas gives a good picture of the life of these great Asiatic barons, a life of luxury, wealth, and splendour; the beauty of their palaces built in the midst of gardens and glittering with jewels and gold and with shining mosaics; the marvellous feasts which were given in these castles, the unparalleled extravagance of costume and arms, the great hunting expeditions, the adventures in love and in war, and the wonderful exploits of which their life was full. There also is shewn the independent temper of these great barons; and above all we realise the violent and brutal, chivalrous and heroic, existence which was led on the frontiers of Asia, subject to the perpetual menace of a Muslim invasion and to the constant care for the defence of the Empire and the Orthodox religion. It was a land of fine feats of arms, of single combats, abductions, pillage, massacres, adventure, war. No doubt the epic has embellished it with a touch of the marvellous; it has adorned with grace

and courtesy the real and permanent background of brutality and cruelty which characterised this society. Nevertheless it explains how good a preparation for life and for warfare this rough existence was to these men of the provinces, and how it enabled these indefatigable warriors to become the real strength of the monarchy.

The provinces, and especially the Asiatic provinces, supplied the Empire with its best soldiers and with the greater part of the crews for the fleet. The themes of Anatolia, as has been said, "really formed the Roman Empire." When contrasted with the capital, the Byzantine provinces appear as a hardy element, healthy and strong, with their rough peasants, their tenants of military fiefs (*καβαλλάριοι*), and their great nobles marvellously trained for war from boyhood. These men indeed had their faults and they were often dangerous to the Empire. The curious little book in which one of them, Cecaumenus, towards the middle of the eleventh century summed up the lessons of his long experience, and of his realistic and somewhat disillusioned wisdom, reveals them as rather mistrustful of the capital as too refined, too elegant, and of the court as too fertile in humiliations and disgraces. They lived on their estates and were eager to enrich themselves; as loyal and faithful subjects they served in the army; above all, they wished to remain independent. But such as they were, they were the strength of the Empire. As long as Byzantium was mistress of Asia, she was strong militarily and economically. When, at the end of the eleventh century, she lost the greater part of Anatolia, it was a terrible blow from which the Empire never recovered.

V.

We must now seek to ascertain from the sources at our disposal what was the mentality of the medieval Greeks, and to discover the general character, so complex and complicated, of the Byzantine mind. We have already described some of the dominant tastes of this society, the place held by religion both in public and private life, the love of shows, of ceremonies, of the games in the circus, the taste for intrigue and for magnificence; we have referred to the industrial and commercial activity, the stout military energy, and above all the intellectual superiority which characterised it. To arrive at a complete understanding of the Byzantine character, we must also remember of how many different elements and how many different races this medieval Greek society was composed. Situated on the borders of Asia and Europe, and subject alike to the influences of the Persian and Arabian East and the infiltration of all the Northern barbarians, this society was essentially cosmopolitan. Here Slavs, Thracians, Armenians, Caucasians, Italians, and Arabs met and mingled; certain races, such as Slavs and Armenians, at certain moments exercised a preponderating influence. By the prestige and power of her civilisation Byzantium indeed succeeded in assimilating

and transforming these apparently opposed and refractory elements, and such was the strength of the classical tradition with which this society was imbued that Hellenism stamped its impress deep on all these foreigners, and that Greek, the language of the Church, of the administration, and of the literature, acquired, as has been said by Rambaud, "a false air of being the national language" in the Byzantine Empire. But under this common stamp there existed many contrasts, and the Byzantine mind presented a mixture, often contradictory and sometimes disconcerting, of high qualities and startling vices.

In many ways the Byzantine was an Oriental. As we have seen, he delighted in magnificent spectacles; it did not displease him if these spectacles were bloody and savage. We know the atrocity of Byzantine punishments, the refinements of torture with which the people wreaked their anger on their victims. By contact with the East these Greeks acquired a cruel mentality; they were pitiless as they were unscrupulous; they delighted in alternations of bloodshed, sensuality, and death. When their passions were aroused, when their anger was excited, when their religious or political hatred was unloosed, these nervous and impressionable people were capable of all kinds of violence. And like the Turks of the present day, whom they resemble in many particulars, these same men, when cool, shewed themselves to be gifted with strong qualities and real virtues. Among the Byzantine middle class, as depicted by Psellus, and even among the aristocracy, we find charming examples of the close ties of family life. But in these same exquisite minds there was sometimes to be found a singular hardness of heart, and their religious preoccupation encouraged in them a lack of balance and steadiness, and a mystic exaltation, which rendered them dangerous to handle.

But, although they were akin to the East, the Byzantines were also Greeks, keenly interested in all things of the mind, curious about enquiries and subtleties of all kinds, and generally intelligent to a very high degree. Like true Greeks, they delighted in the refinements of argument, applying the methods of ancient sophistry to religious matters with a passionate ardour. They delighted in words; in their eyes eloquence was always the supreme virtue. And they also delighted in gossip, in raillery, and in abuse, whether it were vulgar or witty. But although they were thereby indeed the heirs of the Athenians of Aristophanes, Christianity had given another direction to these tendencies. The Byzantines believed in miracles, in soothsayers, in magic, in astrology; they lived in an atmosphere of exalted mysticism, and when their piety was involved, they were prepared to sacrifice everything, even their country, to their desire to prove their case and triumph in the controversy.

Under this twofold influence a very complex character became formed. In great moments indeed—and these were frequent—the Byzantines

were capable of valour, of delicacy, of disinterestedness, of devotion. There were many very worthy men in Byzantine society. Nevertheless the morality of most was indifferent, or even doubtful. In spite of the apparently severe segregation of feminine life, there was great corruption in the Greek world of the Middle Ages. The administration, in spite of the great services it rendered to the State, was honeycombed with vices. As places were sold, so were favours and justice. To make a fortune and gain advancement, merit was of less use than intrigue, and even among the best, by the side of undeniable good qualities, there is visible an eager pursuit of selfish aims, whether of pleasure or of adventure, wealth or power, and a manner of conducting life which left too much scope for skilful acuteness, for successful cunning, and for cleverly calculated treachery. And this explains why these supple and subtle Greeks, in spite of their real virtues, were always regarded with distrust by the blunt and straightforward Latins, and why so many lamentable prejudices arose in the West against Byzantium which have survived to the present day.

What is specially noticeable in the Byzantines, who were as extraordinarily ardent for good as for evil, is a frequent lack of balance and steadiness, and above all a striking discrepancy between their intelligence, which is unquestionable and often admirable, and their character, which was not up to the level of their mentality. We feel that they were overburdened by their past, that their energies were soon exhausted, and that they were wanting in moral principles. Whether we consider Psellus, who was certainly one of the most remarkable men produced by Byzantium, and the most finished type of courtier, or, in a somewhat different social grade, John Cantacuzene, or again Andronicus Comnenus, or a provincial mind such as is revealed in the writings of Cecaumenus—everywhere we find the same characteristics: a prudent cleverness untroubled by idle scruples, a wary caution bordering on cunning, unmeasured ambitions and vile intrigues, a subtle intelligence which is not supported by moral principles. But although demoralisation was undoubted and deep-seated, the Byzantines were always supremely talented. Compared with the barbarians who surrounded them, these ingenious and cultivated Greeks, who reflected on complex and difficult themes and speculations, and who knew how to express their thoughts in fine language, who were capable of comprehending and discussing the most delicate problems, who understood how to resolve all the difficulties of life with elegant ingenuity, and who moreover were not hampered by idle scruples, seem like men of a higher race, like educators and masters. It was for this reason that Byzantine civilisation exercised such profound influence on the whole medieval world, as much by its external splendour as by its innate value, and that it rendered eminent services alike to the Arabs and Slavs in the East and to the Latins in the West.

VI.

To the Slav and Oriental world Byzantium was what Rome has been to the Western and Germanic world, that is to say the great educator, the great initiator, the bringer both of religion and of civilisation. She supplied the Serbs, Croats, Bulgars, and Russians, not only with the Orthodox faith but with all the elements of their future greatness, the conception of government, the principles of law, the forms of more refined life and of intellectual and artistic culture. Byzantium gave the Slavs their alphabet and their literary language on the day when Cyril and Methodius, "the Apostles of the Slavs," translated the Scriptures into a Slavonic dialect for the use of the Moravians whom they were about to convert, and invented the Glagolitic script in which to write their translation. Not only by her missionaries but also by her architects who built churches for the new converts and her artists who decorated them with mosaics and frescoes, Byzantium brought historic life and civilisation to all the Slav nations of the East; over all of these and also over the nations of the Asiatic East, the Armenians and even the Arabs, she exercised supremacy to a greater or lesser degree, by means of her literature, her art, her laws, her religion. To all of them she presented a marvellous model; and thereby Byzantium accomplished a very great work in the general history of civilisation.

To the West she also gave many things. For centuries, as we know, the Greek Empire possessed more or less important parts of Italy, and the imperial government made so great and successful an effort to assimilate its Italian subjects, that even under the Norman and Angevin kings the peninsula seemed like a new *Magna Graecia*. We have referred to the active relations which Syrian and Byzantine merchants maintained in the Western Mediterranean and the numerous establishments founded there by Greek monks. We have called special attention to the marvellous prestige which the imperial city enjoyed among Western peoples, and how all works of art which were difficult of execution or of rare quality were sought in Constantinople. The close relations established by the Crusades led to yet greater knowledge of the Byzantine world. From this incessant contact the West derived enormous intellectual benefit.

It was from Byzantium that there came the knowledge of the Justinianean Law, and the masters who taught it in Bologna from the close of the eleventh century played no small part in spreading the principles from which jurists derived absolute monarchy and divine right. It was from Byzantium that there came the great artistic movement which, between the fifth and seventh centuries, created the monuments in Ravenna and Rome, and which later, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, made the splendour of Venice and of Norman Sicily. St Mark's, which is a reproduction of the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, with its five domes, the richness of its marbles, metal-work, and

mosaics, the gleam of the purple and gold which illuminate it, offers the most exact picture of Byzantium as she was in the days of the Macedonian renaissance. The mosaics at Cefalù, in the Capella Palatina at Palermo, in the Martorana Church, and at Monreale are admirable examples of the genius of Byzantine artists. For centuries Byzantine art was, as has been said, "the standard art of Europe," and in the Middle Ages only Gothic art was capable of an equally vast and fruitful growth. Both the Carolingian and the Ottonian renaissance were infinitely indebted to Byzantium; Romanesque architecture and decoration were inspired by Byzantine lessons and models far more than is generally believed. No doubt the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204 and the half-century of Latin supremacy which followed were a serious blow for the Greek capital and for Byzantine civilisation from which politically the Empire never recovered. But even though under the Palaeologi decadence was evident, Constantinople still remained a wonderful city, and the Greek world still retained part of its intellectual and artistic superiority. The Italian Primitives of the Trecento were in many ways Byzantines. It was in the school of Byzantium that fourteenth-century Italy learnt Greek; the great professors in the days of the Palaeologi were the initiators of the revival of Greek studies, and they contributed in no small measure to prepare the great movement of humanism. Finally, it was from Byzantium, which from the eleventh century had restored it to a place in education, that Italy learnt the Platonic philosophy. And though indeed it is an exaggeration to say, as has been done, that without Byzantium the world would perhaps never have known the Renaissance, it is at least undeniable that Byzantium played a great part in bringing it to pass, and that, by the services it rendered to the European world as well as by its own brilliancy, Byzantine civilisation deserves an eminent place in the history of thought, of art, and of humanity.

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OF TITLES
OF PERIODICALS, SOCIETIES, ETC.**

(1) The following abbreviations are used for titles of periodicals :

- AB. Analecta Bollandiana. Brussels.
 AHR. American Historical Review. New York and London.
 AKKR. Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht. Mayence.
 AMur. Archivio Muratoriano. Rome.
 Arch. Ven. (and N. Arch. Ven.; Arch. Ven.-Tri.). Archivio veneto. Venice. 40 vols. 1871-90. Continued as Nuovo archivio veneto. 1st series. 20 vols. 1891-1900. New series. 42 vols. 1901-1921. And Archivio veneto-tridentino. 1922 ff., in progress.
 ASA.K. Anzeiger für schweizerische Alterthumskunde. Zurich.
 ASHF. Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France. Paris.
 ASI. Archivio storico italiano. Florence. Ser. I. 20 v. and App. 9 v. 1842-53. Index. 1857. Ser. nuova. 18 v. 1855-63. Ser. III. 26 v. 1865-77. Indexes to II and III. 1874. Suppt. 1877. Ser. IV. 20 v. 1878-87. Index. 1891. Ser. V. 49 v. 1888-1912. Index. 1900. Anni 71 etc. 1913 ff., in progress. (Index in Catalogue of The London Library vol. I. 1913.)
 ASL. Archivio storico lombardo. Milan.
 ASPN. Archivio storico per le province napoletane. Naples. 1876 ff.
 ASRSP. Archivio della Società romana di storia patria. Rome.
 BISI. Bullettino dell' Istituto storico italiano. Rome. 1886 ff.
 BRAH. Boletin de la R. Academia de la historia. Madrid.
 BZ. Byzantinische Zeitschrift. Leipsic. 1892 ff.
 CQR. Church Quarterly Review. London.
 CR. Classical Review. London.
 DZG. Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft. Freiburg-im-Breisgau.
 DZKR. Deutsche Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht. Leipsic.
 EHR. English Historical Review. London.
 FDG. Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte. Göttingen.
 HJ. Historisches Jahrbuch. Munich.
 HVJS. Historische Vierteljahrsschrift. Leipsic.
 HZ. Historische Zeitschrift (von Sybel). Munich and Berlin.
 JA. Journal Asiatique. Paris.
 JB. Jahresberichte der Geschichtswissenschaft im Auftrage der historischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin. Berlin. 1878 ff.
 JHS. Journal of Hellenic Studies. London.
 JRAS. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain. London.
 JSG. Jahrbuch für schweizerische Geschichte. Zurich.
 JTS. Journal of Theological Studies. London.
 MA. Le moyen âge. Paris.
 MIOGF. Mittheilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Innsbruck.
 Neu. Arch. Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde Hanover and Leipsic.
 NRDF. Nouvelle Revue historique du droit français. Paris.
 QFIA. Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken. Rome.
 RA. Revue archéologique. Paris.

RBén.	Revue bénédictine. Maredsous.
RCHL.	Revue critique d'histoire et de littérature. Paris.
RH.	Revue historique. Paris.
RHD.	Revue d'histoire diplomatique. Paris.
RHE.	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique. Louvain.
Rhein. Mus.	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie. Frankfort-on-Main.
RN.	Revue de numismatique. Paris.
RQCA.	Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte. Rome.
RQH.	Revue des questions historiques. Paris.
RSH.	Revue de synthèse historique. Paris.
RSI.	Rivista storica italiana. Turin. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
SKAW.	Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vienna. [Philos.-hist. Classe.]
SPA.W.	Sitzungsberichte der kön. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin.
TRHS.	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society. London.
VV.	Vizantyiski Vremennik (<i>Bučavričà Xpovicà</i>). St Petersburg (Petrograd). 1894 ff.
ZCK.	Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst. Düsseldorf.
ZDMG.	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft. Leipsic.
ZKG.	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte. Gotha.
ZKT.	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie. Gotha.
ZMNP.	Zhurnal ministerstva narodnago prosvěshcheniya (Journal of the Ministry of Public Instruction). St Petersburg.
ZR.	Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte. Weimar. 1861-78. Continued as
ZSR.	Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtswissenschaft. Weimar. 1880 ff.
ZWT.	Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie. Frankfort-on-Main.

(2) Other abbreviations used are :

AcadIBL.	Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.
AcadIP.	Académie Impériale de Pétersbourg.
AllgDB.	Allgemeine deutsche Biographie. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
ASBen.	See Mabillon and Acheray in <i>Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
ASBoll.	Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
BEC.	Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
BGén.	Nouvelle Biographie générale. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
BHE.	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
Bouquet.	See Rerum Gallicarum...scriptores in <i>Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
BUniv.	Biographie universelle. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
Coll. textes.	Collection des textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
CSCO.	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
CSEL.	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
CSHB.	Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
DNB.	Dictionary of National Biography. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
EefrAR.	Écoles francaises d'Athènes et de Rome. Paris.
EncBr.	Encyclopaedia Britannica. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
Ersch-Gruber.	Ersch and Gruber's Allgemeine Encyklopädie. <i>See Gen. Bibl. I.</i>
Fonti.	Fonti per la storia d'Italia. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
Jaffé.	<i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
KAW.	Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vienna.
Mansi.	<i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
MEC.	Mémoires et documents publ. par l'École des Chartes. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
MGH.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
MHP.	Monumenta historiae patriae. Turin. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
MHSM.	Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium. <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>
MPG.	Migne's Patrologiae cursus completus. Ser. graeco-latina. [Greek texts with Latin translations in parallel columns.] <i>See Gen. Bibl. IV.</i>

MPL.	Migne's <i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> . Ser. latina. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv.
PAW.	Königliche preussische Akademie d. Wissenschaften. Berlin.
RAH.	Real Academia de la Historia. Madrid.
RC.	Record Commissioners.
RE ³ .	Real-Encyklopädie für protestantische Theologie, etc. <i>See Herzog and Hauck in Gen. Bibl.</i> i.
Rec. hist.	Cr. Recueil des historiens des Croisades. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv.
RGS.	Royal Geographical Society.
RHS.	Royal Historical Society.
Rolls.	Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv.
RR.II.SS.	<i>See Muratori in Gen. Bibl.</i> iv.
SGUS.	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum. <i>See Monumenta Germaniae Historica in Gen. Bibl.</i> iv.
SHF.	Société d'histoire française.
SRD.	Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv.

Abh.	Abhandlungen.	mem.	memoir.
antiq.	antiquarian, antiquaire.	mém.	mémoire.
app.	appendix.	n.s.	new series.
coll.	collection.	publ.	published, publié.
diss.	dissertation.	R. }	reale.
hist.	history, historical, historique, historisch.	r. }	royal, royale.
Jahrb.	Jahrbuch.	ser.	series.
k.	{kaiserlich. königlich.	soc.	society, société, società.
		Viert.	Vierteljahrsschrift.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BYZANTINE CIVILISATION.

I. SOURCES.

[The data for the history of Byzantine Civilisation are derived from the whole of Byzantine literature. It would therefore be impossible as well as useless to give a complete list of sources. Only the sources concerning the monuments and life of Constantinople are enumerated below.]

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**CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
OF
LEADING EVENTS MENTIONED IN THIS VOLUME**

- 330 (11 May) Inauguration of Constantinople, 'New Rome,' by Constantine the Great.
- 428–633 Persian rule in Armenia.
- 476 Deposition of Romulus Augustus.
- 529 Justinian's Code.
- 533 Justinian's *Digest* and *Institutes*.
- 535 Justinian's *Novels*.
- 537 Inauguration of St Sophia.
- 558 The Avars appear in Europe.
- 565 Death of Justinian.
- 568 The Lombards invade Italy.
The Avars enter Pannonia.
- c. 582 Creation of the exarchates of Africa and Ravenna.
- 626 The Avars besiege Constantinople.
- 627 Defeat of the Persians by Heraclius at Nineveh.
- 631 The Avars defeat the Bulgarians.
- 633–693 Byzantine rule in Armenia.
- 635 The Bulgarians free themselves from the power of the Chazars.
- c. 650 Creation of the Asiatic themes.
- 679 Establishment of the Bulgarians south of the Danube.
- 693–862 Arab rule in Armenia.
- 713 First Venetian Doge elected.
- 717 (25 March) Accession of Leo III the Isaurian.
- 717–718 The Arabs besiege Constantinople.
- 726 Edict against images.
- 727 Insurrections in Greece and Italy.
- 732 Victory of Charles Martel at Poitiers (Tours).
- 739 Battle of Acroinon.
- 740 Publication of the *Ecloga*.
Death of Leo III the Isaurian, and accession of Constantine V Copronymus.
- 741 Insurrection of Artavasdos.
- 742 (2 Nov.) Recovery of Constantinople by Constantine V.
- 744 Murder of Walid II. The Caliphate falls into anarchy.
- 747 Annihilation of the Egyptian fleet.
- 750 Foundation of the Abbasid Caliphate.
- 751 Taking of Ravenna by the Lombards.
- 753 Iconoclastic Council of Hieria.
- 754 Donation of Pepin to the Papacy.
- 755 The war with the Bulgarians begins.
- 756 'Abd-ar-Rahmān establishes an independent dynasty in Spain.
- 757 Election of Pope Paul IV. Ratification of Papal elections ceases to be asked of the Emperor of the East.
- 758 Risings of the Slaves of Thrace and Macedonia.
- 759 Defeat of the Bulgarians at Marcellae.
- 762 Baghdad founded by the Caliph Mansūr.
Defeat of the Bulgarians at Anchialus.
- 764–771 Persecution of the image-worshippers.
- 772 Defeat of the Bulgarians at Lithosoria.

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- 774 Annexation of the Lombard kingdom by Charlemagne.
 775 (14 Sept.) Death of the Emperor Constantine V and accession of Leo IV
 the Chazar.
 780 (8 Sept.) Death of Leo IV and Regency of Irene.
 781 Pope Hadrian I ceases to date official acts by the regnal years of the
 Emperor.
 787 Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. Condemnation of Iconoclasm.
 788 Establishment of the Idrisid dynasty in Morocco.
 790 (Dec.) Abdication of Irene. Constantine VI assumes power.
 797 (17 July) Deposition of Constantine VI. Irene becomes Emperor.
 800 Establishment of the Aghlabid dynasty in Tunis.
 (25 Dec.) Charlemagne crowned Emperor of the West.
 802 (31 Oct.) Deposition of Irene and accession of Nicephorus I.
 803 Destruction of the Barmecides.
 809 Death of Hārūn ar-Rashid and civil war in the Caliphate.
 The Bulgarian Khan Krum invades the Empire.
 Pepin of Italy's attack upon Venice.
 810 Nicephorus I's scheme of financial reorganisation.
 Concentration of the lagoon-townsships at Rialto.
 811 The Emperor Nicephorus I is defeated and slain by the Bulgarians:
 accession of Michael I Rangabé.
 812 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle recognises Charlemagne's imperial title.
 813 Michael I defeated at Versinicia: Krum appears before Constantinople.
 Deposition of Michael I and accession of Leo V the Armenian.
 Battle of Mesembria.
 Ma'mün becomes sole Caliph.
 814 (14 April) Death of Krum: peace between the Empire and the Bulgarians.
 815 Iconoclastic synod of Constantinople.
 Banishment of Theodore of Studion.
 820 (25 Dec.) Murder of Leo V, and accession of Michael II the Amorian.
 822 Insurrection of Thomas the Slavonian.
 826 Death of Theodore of Studion.
 Conquest of Crete by the Arabs.
 827 Arab invasion of Sicily.
 829–842 Reign of Theophilus.
 832 Edict of Theophilus against images.
 833 Death of the Caliph Ma'mün.
 836 The Abbasid capital removed from Baghdad to Sāmarrā.
 839 Treaty between the Russians and the Greeks.
 840 Treaty of Pavia between the Emperor Lothar I and Venice.
 842 The Arabs take Messina.
 Disintegration of the Caliphate begins.
 842–867 Reign of Michael III.
 843 Council of Constantinople, and final restoration of image-worship by the
 Empress Theodora.
 846 Ignatius becomes Patriarch.
 852–893 Reign of Boris in Bulgaria.
 856–866 Rule of Bardas.
 858 Deposition of Ignatius and election of Photius as Patriarch.
 860 The Russians appear before Constantinople.
 860–861 (?) Cyril's mission to the Chazars.
 863 (?) Mission of Cyril and Methodius to the Moravians.
 864 Conversion of Bulgaria to orthodoxy.
 867 The Schism of Photius.
 The Synod of Constantinople completes the rupture with Rome.
 (23 Sept.) Murder of Michael III and accession of Basil I the Macedonian.
 Deposition of Photius. Restoration of Ignatius.
 867 (13 Nov.) Death of Pope Nicholas I.
 (14 Dec.) Election of Pope Hadrian II.
 868 Independence of Egypt under the Tūlūnid dynasty.

- 869 (14 Feb.) Death of Cyril.
 Ecumenical Council of Constantinople. End of the Schism.
- 870 Methodius becomes the first Moravo-Pannonian archbishop.
- 871 War with the Paulicians.
- 876 Capture of Bari from the Saracens by the Greeks.
- 877 Death of Ignatius and reinstatement of Photius as Patriarch.
 (22 July) Council of Ravenna.
- 878 (21 May) Capture of Syracuse by the Arabs.
- 878(?) Promulgation of the *Prochiron*.
- 882 Fresh rupture between the Eastern and Western Churches; excommunication of Photius.
- 885 (6 April) Death of Methodius.
- 886-912 Reign of Leo VI the Wise.
- 886 Deposition and exile of Photius.
- 887-892 Reign of Ashot I in Armenia.
 c. 888 Publication of the *Basilics*.
- 891 Death of Photius.
- 892 The Abbasid capital restored to Baghdad.
- 892-914 Reign of Smbat I in Armenia.
- 893-927 Reign of Simeon in Bulgaria.
- 895-896 The Magyars migrate into Hungary.
- 898 Reconciliation between the Eastern and Western Churches.
- 899 The Magyars invade Lombardy.
- 900 Victory of Nicephorus Phocas at Adana.
 The Magyars occupy Pannonia.
- 902 (1 Aug.) Fall of Taormina, the last Greek stronghold in Sicily.
- 904 Thessalonica sacked by the Saracens.
- 906 Leo VI's fourth marriage: contest with the Patriarch.
 The Magyars overthrow the Great Moravian State.
- 907 Russian expedition against Constantinople.
- 909-1171 The Fatimid Caliphate in Africa.
- 912 (11 May) Death of Leo VI and accession of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus under the regency of Alexander.
- 913 Simeon of Bulgaria appears before Constantinople.
- 915-928 Reign of Ashot II in Armenia.
- 917 (20 Aug.) Bulgarian victory at Anchialus.
- 919 (25 Mar.) Usurpation of Romanus Lecapenus.
- 920 (June) A Council at Constantinople pronounces upon fourth marriages.
- 923 Simeon besieges Constantinople.
- 927 (8 Sept.) Peace with Bulgaria.
- 932 Foundation of the Buwaihid dynasty.
- 933 Venice establishes her supremacy in Istria.
- 941 Russian expedition against Constantinople.
- 944 (16 Dec.) Deposition of Romanus Lecapenus. Personal rule of Constantine VII begins.
- 945 The Buwaihids enter Baghdad and control the Caliphate.
- 954 Princess Olga of Russia embraces Christianity.
- 955 Battle of the Lechfeld.
- 959 (9 Nov.) Death of Constantine VII and accession of Romanus II.
- 959-976 Reign of the Doge Peter IV Candianus.
- 961 Recovery of Crete by Nicephorus Phocas.
 (Mar.) Advance in Asia by the Greeks.
 Athanasius founds the convent of St Laura on Mt Athos.
- 963 (15 Mar.) Death of Romanus II: accession of Basil II: regency of Theophano.
 (16 Aug.) Usurpation of Nicephorus II Phocas.
- 964 *Novel* against the monks.
- 965 Conquest of Cilicia.
- 967 Renewal of the Bulgarian war.
- 968 The Russians in Bulgaria.

- 969 (28 Oct.) Capture of Antioch.
 The Fâtimid Caliphs annex Egypt.
 (10 Dec.) Murder of Nicephorus Phocas and accession of John Tzimisces.
- 970 Capture of Aleppo.
 Accession of Géza as Prince of the Magyars.
- 971 Revolt of Bardas Phocas.
 The Emperor John Tzimisces annexes Eastern Bulgaria.
- 972 Death of Svyatoslav of Kiev.
- 976 (10 Jan.) Death of John Tzimisces: personal rule of Basil II Bulgarianus begins.
 Peter Orseolo I elected Doge.
- 976-979 Revolt of Bardas Sclerus.
- 980 Accession of Vladímir in Russia.
- 985 Fall of the eunuch Basil.
- 986-1018 Great Bulgarian War.
- 987-989 Conspiracy of Phocas and Sclerus.
- 988 The Fâtimid Caliphs occupy Syria.
- 989 Baptism of Vladímir of Russia.
 Vladímir captures Cherson.
- 991 The Fâtimids re-occupy Syria.
- 991-1009 Reign of Peter Orseolo II as Doge.
- 992 (19 July) First Venetian treaty with the Eastern Empire.
- 994 Saif-ad-Daulah takes Aleppo and establishes himself in Northern Syria.
- 994-1001 War with the Fâtimids.
- 995 Basil II's campaign in Syria.
- 996 (Jan.) *Novel* against the Powerful.
 Defeat of the Bulgarians on the Spercheus.
- 997 Accession of St Stephen in Hungary, and conversion of the Magyars.
- 998-1030 Reign of Mahmûd of Ghaznah.
- 1006 Vladímir of Russia makes a treaty with the Bulgarians.
- 1009 The Patriarch Sergius erases the Pope's name from the diptychs.
- 1014 Battle of Cimbalongu; death of the Tsar Samuel.
- 1015 Death of Vladímir of Russia.
- 1018-1186 Bulgaria a Byzantine province.
- 1021-1022 Annexation of Vaspurakan to the Empire.
- 1024 The Patriarch Eustathius attempts to obtain from the Pope the autonomy of the Greek Church.
- 1025 (15 Dec.) Death of Basil II and accession of Constantine VIII.
- 1026 Fall of the Orseoli at Venice.
- 1028 (11 Nov.) Death of Constantine VIII and succession of Zoë and Romanus III Argyrus.
- 1030 Defeat of the Greeks near Aleppo.
- 1031 Capture of Edessa by George Maniaces.
- 1034 (12 April) Murder of Romanus III and accession of Michael IV the Paphlagonian.
 Government of John the Orphanotrophos.
- 1038 Death of St Stephen of Hungary.
 Success of George Maniaces in Sicily.
 The Seljûq Tughril Beg proclaimed.
- 1041 (10 Dec.) Death of Michael IV and succession of Michael V Calaphates.
 Banishment of John the Orphanotrophos.
- 1042 (21 April) Revolution in Constantinople; fall of Michael V.
 Zoë and Theodora joint Empresses.
 (11-12 June) Zoë's marriage; accession of her husband, Constantine IX Monomachus.
- 1043 Michael Cerularius becomes Patriarch.
 Rising of George Maniaces; his defeat and death at Ostrovo.
- 1045 Foundation of the Law School of Constantinople.
- 1046 Annexation of Armenia (Ani) to the Empire.
- 1047 Revolt of Tornicetus.

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- 1048 Appearance of the Seljūqs on the eastern frontier of the Empire.
1050 Death of the Empress Zoë.
1054 (20 July) The Patriarch Michael Cerularius breaks with Rome; schism between the Eastern and Western Churches.
1055 (11 Jan.) Death of Constantine IX; Theodora sole Empress.
The Seljūq Tughril Beg enters Baghdad.
1056 (31 Aug.) Death of Theodora and proclamation of Michael VI Stratioticus.
1057 Revolt of Isaac Comnenus. Deposition of Michael VI.
(1 Sept.?) Isaac I Comnenus crowned Emperor at Constantinople.
1058 Deposition and death of Michael Cerularius.
1059 Treaty of Melfi.
Abdication of Isaac Comnenus.
1059–1067 Reign of Constantine X Ducas.
1063 Death of Tughril Beg.
1063–1072 Reign of the Seljūq Alp Arslān.
1064 Capture of Ani by the Seljūqs, and conquest of Greater Armenia.
1066 Foundation of the Nīzāmiyah University at Baghdad.
1067–1071 Reign of Romanus III Diogenes.
1071 Capture of Bari by the Normans and loss of Italy.
Battle of Manzikert.
The Seljūqs occupy Jerusalem.
1071–1078 Reign of Michael VII Parapinaces Ducas.
1072–1092 Reign of the Seljūq Malik Shāh.
1077 Accession of Sulaimān I, Sultan of Rūm.
1078 The Turks at Nicaea.
1078–1081 Reign of Nicephorus III Botaniates.
1080 Alliance between Robert Guiscard and Pope Gregory VII.
Foundation of the Armeno-Cilician kingdom.
1081–1118 Reign of Alexius I Comnenus.
1081–1084 Robert Guiscard's invasion of Epirus.
1082 Treaty with Venice.
1086 Incursions of the Patzinaks begin.
1091 (29 April) Defeat of the Patzinaks at the river Leburnium.
1094–1095 Invasion of the Cumans.
1094 Council of Piacenza.
1095 (18–28 Nov.) Council of Clermont proclaims the First Crusade.
1096 The Crusaders at Constantinople.
1097 The Crusaders capture Nicaea.
1098 Council of Bari. St Anselm refutes the Greeks.
1099 Establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.
1100 (18 July) Death of Godfrey of Bouillon.
1104 Defeat of the Crusaders at Harrān.
1107 Bohemond's expedition against Constantinople,
1108 Battle of Durazzo.
Treaty with Bohemond.
1116 Battle of Philomelium.
1118–1143 Reign of John II Comnenus.
1119 First expedition of John Comnenus to Asia Minor.
1122 Defeat of the Patzinaks near Eski-Sagra.
1122–1126 War with Venice.
1128 The Emperor John Comnenus defeats the Hungarians near Haram.
1137 (May) Roger II of Sicily's fleet defeated off Trani.
1137–1138 Campaign of John Comnenus in Cilicia and Syria.
1143–1180 Reign of Manuel I Comnenus.
1147–1149 The Second Crusade.
1147–1149 War with Roger II of Sicily.
1151 The Byzantines at Ancona.
1152–1154 Hungarian War.
1154 Death of Roger II of Sicily.

- 1158 Campaign of Manuel Comnenus in Syria.
 1159 His solemn entry into Antioch; zenith of his power.
 1163 Expulsion of the Greeks from Cilicia.
 1164 Battle of Hârim.
 1168 Annexation of Dalmatia.
 1170 The Emperor Manuel attempts to re-unite the Greek and Armenian Churches.
 1171 Rupture of Manuel with Venice.
 1173 Frederick Barbarossa besieges Ancona.
 1176 Battle of Myricephalum.
 Battle of Legnano.
 1177 Peace of Venice.
 1180-1183 Reign of Alexius II Comnenus.
 1180 Foundation of the Serbian monarchy by Stephen Nemanja.
 1182 Massacre of Latins in Constantinople.
 1183 (Sept.) Andronicus I Comnenus becomes joint Emperor.
 (Nov.) Murder of Alexius II.
 1185 The Normans take Thessalonica.
 Deposition and death of Andronicus; accession of Isaac II Angelus.
 1185-1219 Reign of Leo II the Great of Cilicia.
 1186 Second Bulgarian Empire founded.
 1187 Saladin captures Jerusalem.
 1189 Sack of Thessalonica.
 1189-1192 Third Crusade.
 1190 Death of Frederick Barbarossa in the East.
 Isaac Angelus defeated by the Bulgarians.
 1191 Occupation of Cyprus by Richard Coeur-de-Lion.
 1192 Guy de Lusignan purchases Cyprus from Richard I.
 1193-1205 Reign of the Doge Enrico Dandolo.
 1195 Deposition of Isaac II; accession of Alexius III Angelus.
 1197-1207 The Bulgarian Tsar Johannitsa (Kalojan).
 1201 (April) Fourth Crusade. The Crusaders' treaty with Venice.
 (May) Boniface of Montferrat elected leader of the Crusade.
 1203 (17 July) The Crusaders enter Constantinople.
 Deposition of Alexius III; restoration of Isaac II with Alexius IV Angelus.
 1203-1227 Empire of Jenghiz Khan.
 1204 (8 Feb.) Deposition of Isaac II and Alexius IV; accession of Alexius V Ducas (Mourtzouphlos).
 (13 April) Sack of Constantinople.
 (16 May) Coronation of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and foundation of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.
 The compulsory union of the Eastern and Western Churches.
 The Venetians purchase the island of Crete.
 Alexius Comnenus founds the state of Trebizond.
 1205 (14 April) The Bulgarians defeat the Emperor Baldwin I at Adrianople.
 1206 (21 Aug.) Henry of Flanders crowned Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 Theodore I Lascaris crowned Emperor of Nicaea.
 1208 Peace with the Bulgarians.
 1210 The Turks of Rûm defeated on the Maeander by Theodore Lascaris.
 1212 Peace with Nicaea.
 1215 The Fourth Lateran Council.
 1216 Death of the Emperor Henry, and succession of Peter of Courtenay.
 1217 Stephen crowned King of Serbia.
 1218 Death of Geoffrey of Villehardouin, Prince of Achaia.
 1219 Creation of a separate Serbian Church.
 1221-1228 Reign of Robert of Courtenay, Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 1222 Recovery of Thessalonica by the Greeks of Epirus.
 Death of Theodore Lascaris, Emperor of Nicaea. Accession of John III Vatatzes.

- 1222 First appearance of the Mongols in Europe.
 1224 The Emperor of Nicaea occupies Hadrianople.
 1228 Death of Stephen, the first King of Serbia.
 1228-1237 Reign of John of Brienne, Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 1230 Destruction of the Greek Empire of Thessalonica by the Bulgarians.
 1234 Fall of the Kin Dynasty in China.
 1235 Revival of the Bulgarian Patriarchate.
 1236 Constantinople attacked by the Greeks and Bulgarians.
 1236(?) Alliance between the Armenians and the Mongols.
 1237 Invasion of Europe by the Mongols.
 1237-1261 Reign of Baldwin II, last Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 1241 Battles of Liegnitz and Mohi.
 Death of John Asén II; the decline of Bulgaria begins.
 1244 The Despotat of Thessalonica becomes a vassal of Nicaea.
 1245 Council of Lyons.
 1246 Reconquest of Macedonia from the Bulgarians.
 1254 (30 Oct.) Death of John Vatatzes; Theodore II Lascaris succeeds as Emperor of Nicaea.
 Submission of the Despot of Epirus to Nicaea.
 Mamluk Sultans in Egypt.
 1255-1256 Theodore II's Bulgarian campaigns.
 1256 Overthrow of the Assassins by the Mongols.
 1258 Death of Theodore II Lascaris. Accession of John IV Lascaris.
 Destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols and overthrow of the Caliphate.
 1259 (1 Jan.) Michael VIII Palaeologus proclaimed Emperor of Nicaea.
 1259-1294 Reign of Kublai Khan.
 1260 The Egyptians defeat the Mongols at 'Ain Jalút.
 1261 (25 July) Capture of Constantinople by the Greeks; end of the Latin Empire.
 1261-1530 Abbasid Caliphate in Cairo.
 1266 (Feb.) Charles of Anjou's victory over Manfred at Benevento.
 1267 (27 May) Treaty of Viterbo.
 1267-1272 Progress of Charles of Anjou in Epirus.
 1270 (25 Aug.) Death of St Louis.
 1274 Ecumenical Council at Lyons; union of the Churches again achieved.
 1276 Leo III of Cilicia defeats the Mamlüks.
 1278 Leo III of Cilicia defeats the Seljuqs of Iconium.
 1281 Joint Mongol and Armenian forces defeated by the Mamlüks on the Orontes.
 (18 Nov.) Excommunication of Michael Palaeologus; breach of the Union.
 Victory of the Berat over the Angevins.
 1282 (30 May) The Sicilian Vespers.
 (11 Dec.) Death of Michael Palaeologus. Accession of Andronicus II.
 c. 1290 Foundation of Wallachia.
 1291 Fall of Acre.
 1299 Osmân, Emir of the Ottoman Turks.
 1302 Osmân's victory at Baphaeum.
 End of the alliance between the Armenians and the Mongols.
 1302-1311 The Catalan Grand Company in the East.
 1308 Turks enter Europe.
 Capture of Ephesus by the Turks.
 1309 Capture of Rhodes from the Turks by the Knights of St John.
 1311 Battle of the Cephisus.
 1326 Brûsa surrenders to the Ottoman Turks.
 (Nov.) Death of Osmân.
 1326-1359 Reign of Orkhân.
 1328-1341 Reign of Andronicus III Palaeologus.
 1329 The Ottomans capture Nicaea.
 1330 (28 June) Defeat of the Bulgarians by the Serbians at the battle of Velbužd.

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- 1331 (8 Sept.) Coronation of Stephen Dušan as King of Serbia.
 1336 Birth of Timür.
 1337 The Ottomans capture Nicomedia.
 Conquest of Cilicia by the Mamluks.
 1341 Succession of John V Palaeologus. Rebellion of John Cantacuzene.
 1342–1344 Guy of Lusignan King of Cilicia.
 1342–1349 Revolution of the Zealots at Thessalonica.
 1344–1363 Reign of Constantine IV in Cilicia.
 1345 Stephen Dušan conquers Macedonia.
 1346 Stephen Dušan crowned Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks.
 1347 John VI Cantacuzene takes Constantinople.
 1348 Foundation of the Despotat of Mistra.
 1349 Independence of Moldavia.
 1350 Serbo-Greek treaty.
 1354 The Turks take Gallipoli.
 1355 Abdication of John VI Cantacuzene. Restoration of John V.
 (20 Dec.) Death of Stephen Dušan.
 1356 The Turks begin to settle in Europe.
 1357 The Turks capture Hadrianople.
 1359–1389 Reign of Murad I.
 1360 Formation of the Janissaries from tribute-children.
 1363–1373 Reign of Constantine V in Cilicia.
 1365 The Turks establish their capital at Hadrianople.
 1368 Foundation of the Ming dynasty in China.
 1369 (21 Oct.) John V abjures the schism.
 1371 (26 Sept.) Battle of the Maritza.
 Death of Stephen Uroš V.
 1373 The Emperor John V becomes the vassal of the Sultan Murad.
 1373–1393 Leo VI of Lusignan, the last King of Armenia.
 1375 Capture and exile of Leo VI of Armenia.
 1376–1379 Rebellion of Andronicus IV.
 Coronation of Tvrtko as King of the Serbs and Bosnia.
 1379 Restoration of John V.
 1382 Death of Louis the Great of Hungary.
 1387 Turkish defeat on the Toplica.
 Surrender of Thessalonica to the Turks.
 1389 (15 June) Battle of Kossovo; fall of the Serbian Empire.
 1389–1403 Reign of Bayazid.
 1390 Usurpation of John VII Palaeologus.
 1391 Death of John V. Accession of Manuel II Palaeologus.
 (23 Mar.) Death of Tvrtko I.
 Capture of Philadelphia by the Turks.
 1393 Turkish conquest of Thessaly.
 (17 July) Capture of Trnovo; end of the Bulgarian Empire.
 1394 (10 Oct.) Turkish victory at Rovine in Wallachia.
 1396 (23 Sept.) Battle of Nicopolis.
 1397 Bayazid attacks Constantinople.
 1398 The Turks invade Bosnia.
 Timür invades India and sacks Delhi.
 1401 Timür sacks Baghdad.
 1402 (28 July) Timür defeats the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid at Angora.
 1402–1413 Civil war among the Ottoman Turks.
 1403 (21 Nov.) Second battle of Kossovo.
 1405 Death of Timür.
 1409 Council of Pisa.
 1413–1421 Reign of Mahomet I.
 1413 (10 July) Turkish victory at Chamorlū.
 1416 The Turks declare war on Venice.
 (29 May) Turkish fleet defeated off Gallipoli.
 1418 Death of Mircea the Great of Wallachia.

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- 1421–1451 Reign of Murād II.
1422 Siege of Constantinople by the Turks.
1423 Turkish expedition into the Morea.
Thessalonica purchased by Venice.
1423–1448 Reign of John VIII Palaeologus.
1426 Battle of Choirokoitia.
1430 Capture of Thessalonica by the Turks.
1431 Council of Basle opens.
1432 Death of the last Frankish Prince of Achaia.
1438 (9 April) Opening of the Council of Ferrara.
1439 (10 Jan.) The Council of Ferrara removed to Florence.
(6 July) The Union of Florence.
Completion of the Turkish conquest of Serbia.
1440 The Turks besiege Belgrade.
1441 John Hunyadi appointed voivode of Transylvania.
1443–1468 Skanderbeg's war of independence against the Turks.
1444 (July) Peace of Szegedin.
(10 Nov.) Battle of Varna.
1446 Turkish invasion of the Morea.
1448 (17 Oct.) Third battle of Kossovo. Accession of Constantine XI Palaeologus.
1451 Accession of Mahomet II.
1453 (29 May) Capture of Constantinople by the Turks.
1456 The Turks again besiege Belgrade.
1457 Stephen the Great succeeds in Moldavia.
1458 The Turks capture Athens.
1459 Final end of medieval Serbia.
1461 Turkish conquest of Trebizond.
1462–1479 War between Venice and the Turks.
1463 Turkish conquest of Bosnia.
1468 Turkish conquest of Albania.
1475 Stephen the Great of Moldavia defeats the Turks at Racova.
1479 Venice cedes Scutari to the Turks.
1484 The Montenegrin capital transferred to Cetinje.
1489 Venice acquires Cyprus.
1499 Renewal of Turco-Venetian War.
1517 Conquest of Egypt by the Turks.
1523 Conquest of Rhodes by the Turks.
1537–1540 Third Turco-Venetian War.
1571 Conquest of Cyprus from Venice by the Turks.